2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

and gradually reforming matters, were working towards punishing them in the same manner as theft within the tribe.

The fights between Montenegro and the Turks were usually brought about in this manner. The Montenegrins raided the Turkish borders, especially Herzegovina, till the Turks sent punitive expeditions. All sheep-stealers were considered heroes.

So far as my own experience goes I never had a thing stolen from me when among the Albanian tribes; they dealt honestly by me always.

FINES FOR OTHER MATTERS

In the case of rape the injured family may take blood; or it may compound for peace and accept about £30. The father of an illegitimate child must pay for its keep.

For killing a sheep or cattle a fine of about £2 to £3 per head.

For cutting wood in the forest of others, £2.

For stealing fruit, etc., according to value.

For putting a beast to graze on someone else's pasture, £2.

For putting beasts to graze on your own tribal pasture before the right season, £4.

(The sums given are only approximately taken at the then value of piastres.)

INHERITANCE

No land may be sold or bequeathed to a member of another tribe or any outsider.

The possessor of land can only sell it to his nearest male relative on his father's side.

Women cannot inherit land.

The house and such land as belongs to it is inherited by all a man's sons equally. As a matter of practice they continue living in it, and the eldest son is "zoti i shpis" (house-lord). I have seen a young man of twenty-eight years ordering his old uncles about in most peremptory manner. Expressing surprise at the way they obeyed, I was told: "They must—God has made him house-lord."

Failing sons, the property belongs equally to the nearest male relatives of the deceased, who usually would be his brothers. The eldest is then house-lord.

Should a man leave a wife who has had no children, she is of no account, and must leave the house and return to her father's house. Should she have a son under the age of fifteen she remains to mind the house till he inherits it. Till he is fifteen a guardian takes charge of his affairs. At fifteen he is of age and can carry arms. If the widow has

562 a daughter and no son she has the right to remain a hundred days
592 in the house. Then if the heirs order her to leave she must go, but her
[583] daughter remains as part of the heir's household, and he has the right to choose her husband and dispose of her. In practice the widow may
587 remain in the house as "levirate wife" of one of her brothers-in-law, and very commonly does so among the Dukagini. In Maltsia e Madhe the practice is obsolete.

589 If the widow has had a son who has predeceased his father, she
562 has more consideration. If the house is a small one, she may live in it if capable of carrying on. If a large one, she may live as a member of the heir's household so long as she is unmarried. If she elects to return
[593] to her father, the heir, or heirs, must supply her regularly with wool for spinning, bread, cheese, and other necessaries so long as she remains unmarried.

421 A married daughter has no right to anything whatever of her father's property; she no longer belongs to his "house."

TRIBAL BUSINESS

623 Business relating to the whole tribe requires a very large council. In a large tribe the council may be about a hundred. It includes the heads of houses, the heads of mehalas, the bariaktar, and twelve specially chosen elders famed for their intelligence. Such a council, for example, was needed to decide if each tribe would accept the Turkish Constitution in 1908; to decide if a tribe would revolt or aid another that has revolted; what side it would take in war, and so forth. Smaller councils dealt with pasture lands; how many beasts each house might pasture upon the common lands; the date at which pasturing might begin.

421 The rights of wood-cutting, too, were thus regulated. Certain groups
311 had rights in certain woods. Unluckily no one ever thought of replanting. Great harm has been done by deciding to burn a forest in the
[134] hope of obtaining pasture land; only too often the result being that the winter rain carried away the soil and left bare rock. The water
312 supply is also controlled by council, especially in those districts where an ingenious system of channels carries water great distances and takes it across valleys on rude aqueducts made of hollowed tree-stems.
689 In time of scarcity the number of hours per week in which a man may turn the water into his fields is jealously regulated. Purposely defiling wells and springs was punishable.

671 Not only all the above laws are ascribed to Lek, but many rules intended to keep the peace. For example, that men marching abreast must keep the length of a gun-barrel apart, lest in turning hastily it

and a fringe is made of hair combed forward over the shaven area. 585
The shaven temple makes the face look very wide.

In order to promote fertility, among the Dukagini it was not [842]
uncommon to keep a pair of goats or sheep penned in the corner of the living-room, even when it was at the top of a tall tower and some twenty people lived in it.

On marriage, no kind of privacy is observed. Bride and bridegroom [592]
take their place in the common apartment.

A colossal feast is usual at a wedding, and in the old days it might last several days. A Djakovan friend told me that three oxen, fifteen sheep, and God knows how many fowls had been eaten at his. At all weddings any amount of firing takes place. The tribesman goes on shooting so long as he has a cartridge left, for sheer joy of the "pop-bang." One man I knew fired his whole stock of six hundred cartridges.

Weddings in the Towns.—In Scutari I was guest at two Catholic weddings. The bridegroom saw the bride for the first time in church. She was brought in closely veiled and unveiled only before the altar. Weddings were always on a Monday or Saturday—usually a Monday. "It would be most inconvenient to marry on any other day," was the sole explanation findable.

This is what took place: The marriage had been arranged by the 584
relatives on each side after long conferences. On Sunday afternoon I was invited to the bridegroom's house to see the "gifts." No bride- 583
price in money is paid. Four Scutari ladies in full dress sat on the floor 585
at one end of the room and three men at the other, in charge of the "gifts." These were always the same, and varied only in quality according to the bridegroom's means. The "gifts" were a pair of boots, a pair of slippers, and four boxes of scented soap (or perfume), which were in charge of the men. The ladies watched over a large red silk hand- [291]
kerchief, a pair of white cotton stockings (with pink suspenders sewn on a card, a greatly admired novelty), a pair of scissors, needles and pins in a casket, a distaff to make her a good housewife, and a handsome [301]
necklace of large silver-gilt coins, set in filigree. This is called the "dupa." It is worn by all married women, and is sometimes of gold and very valuable. No doubt it represents the bride-price.

The boots had high gilt heels, yellow uppers, pink elastic sides, [291]
and patent-leather toes, embroidered minutely with wreaths of flowers. They were filled with sweetly scented flowers, that the bride's path on earth might be sweet. We admired the gifts and awaited the arrival of the relative who was to take them to the bride. He arrived with several others; and they dragged from another room the bridegroom, who resisted strongly because "he was so shy." Bride and bridegroom [576]
have to assume a superhuman modesty.

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make acquaintance with the family into which he has married. Again 585
the party is divided into "buck-herds and doe-herds." The husband 574
enters the ladies' room and embraces all of his new female relations,
except his wife, whom modesty compels to turn away. He sups with [576]
the family and goes home alone. Next day the bride is brought back
to his house and the same pantomime of extreme reluctance is gone
through. She comes home usually in a carriage. I was told that formerly
it was etiquette for her to come on foot, but only inch by inch, so that
her return from a house round the corner might perhaps take hours.
She visits her family thus at week-ends for several months, but only
on the first occasion is a carriage and ceremony necessary.

A bridegroom, while I was in Scutari, revolted against the midnight
ceremony, and turned all the guests out of his house after the feast.
In spite of her assumed modesty the bride was deeply hurt at being
thus deprived of publicity. She complained to her parents, who angrily
asked why their daughter should have been thus insulted. Was she
not good enough to show as his wife to his friends in the usual manner?
Nor could they see that in this case the bridegroom's modesty had
been real and not assumed.

He was in the unusual position of having a house of his own. In most 591
cases the young couple lives in the house of the bridegroom's parents 592
in the town and has a separate room. The parents rule and control
the household, and the bride is often very hard-worked. The emigrants
returned from America have brought new ideas and the system is
breaking down.

Much of the above ceremony resembles Roman practice. The distaff,
the casket of household implements, the throwing of sweets, sprinkling
of water, epithalamia, the *patria potestas* also.

The girls of a family must be married according to age—the eldest 582
first, and so on. The origin of this is perhaps that formerly infant
betrothals were almost universal and girls were sent to their husbands
so soon as old enough.

In Scutari, and, I believe, in the other towns, the daughters, or at
least one of them, must be married before the sons can be married.
The explanation offered was that the daughters must be dowered,
and the sons cannot marry till they have helped earn the dowries.
Over these wedding outfits the parties are very exacting. The bride- 583
groom's family bargains for every stitch of the garments and stipulates
as to their quality. While I was in Scutari a betrothed man, who had
always worn Albanian costume, went to work abroad and dressed
à la Franga. He wrote home to say he now required drawers that
could be worn under trousers, and his fiancée, who had already finished
I forget how many dozen voluminous Albanian garments, had all her

PEAKS OF SHALA

000 trembling like a convalescent, but with fever gone and my lungs merely aching. I suggest the remedy for what it is worth.

[417] The byraktor received us at his gateway, for his house was surrounded by a high fence, almost a stockade, of woven branches. He was a tall keen, quick man; bright, dark eyes and aquiline nose and thin, flexible lips, framed by the white turban's fold beneath his chin; a jacket of black sheep's wool; one massive jeweled silver chain on his breast. His swift smile was warm and beautiful, but one had a sense of reservations behind it; he welcomed the audacious Shala man without a quiver, and ushered us up the stone steps to the second floor of his house.

[342] There were several rooms, divided from the main large one by partitions of woven willow boughs, and from the large room a high, arched doorway in the stone wall led into farther regions.

• 592 At least forty men and women and children—five generations—were around the fire on the floor. There was a little flurry of welcome and rearrangement, and in a moment we were in the center of the circle, sitting on thick mats of woven straw, while the byraktor made our coffee in the coals.

[303] The women were beautifully dressed; I had not seen so much elegance of embroidery, of colored headkerchiefs, earrings, and chains of silver and gold coins. Their dark, beautifully modeled faces, large dark eyes, and heavy braids of black hair were set off by the profusion of rich

[House of warchef of Shoshi-] 252 [Analyst]

PEAKS OF SHALA

color. Most of them were sitting on low stools, 592 ●
embroidering or working opangi, and the white-garbed men lounged at their feet, closer to the fire, resting on elbows and smoking.

There was the delicate negotiation about the ooo
mule. The byraktor owned one, but he did not want to take it to Scutari. I left that to Rexh; the byraktor listened to him as courteously as though the boy had been twenty years older, and Rexh bargained with him as with an equal. A hundred kronen, Rexh said, tentatively, at last, but even at that terrific price the byraktor did not seem eager to make the trip (for, of course, he himself would go where his mule went) and Rexh thought best to drop the question for a while.

"Where do you come from?" one of the youths 823
asked me; and when I had replied, "In what direction from here is America?"

"California, the part of America from which I come," I answered—and did not very greatly stretch the truth—"is directly through the earth, on the other side."

Why they sat up in such excitement I did not know; I had expected surprise, but not such a volley of questions, not such a visible sensation. Rexh sat replying to them, earnestly explaining, making a gesture now and then; their eyes followed his hands, fascinated. His talk became a monologue; it went on and on; all work stopped, cigarettes burned to heedless fingers, the coffee bubbled unnoticed by the byraktor. Little Rexh,

† [Shoshi people at [253] warchief's house --Analyst]

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CHAPTER II

THE UNWRITTEN LAW IN OUTLINE

To ensure for all, irrespective of their individual material wealth, a fair share of the essential grazing, arable land and irrigation, there has grown up a corpus of Unwritten Law. This was evolved at some unknown date by the mountaineers, as part of the legal framework which they had devised for every aspect of their life. They evolved all their laws—social, administrative, or pastoral—unaided. For many centuries before the Turks arrived in the fifteenth century, the country was split up into a number of principalities, none of which was strong enough for long to subject a neighbour to its rule. Though the Turks remained for four and a half centuries, they could never exert more than a nominal authority outside the chief towns. If they sent a punitive column into the interior, the people living in the mountains took evasive action, retreating to some peak until the inevitable departure of the intruders; their wealth was so small that they could carry or drive off most of it to their refuge, and so lost little from the raid. If the Turks sent tax or police officials, they fired on them at the first defile as a warning to return to their offices in town. There were no roads along which forces strong enough to be effective could march, in order to reduce them to real submission. The Turkish government, unable to enforce its will, accepted the situation and left the mountaineers to govern themselves, as they had presumably done under their native princes and chiefs. The first all-weather road to be built in North Albania was constructed in 1916 by the Austro-Hungarian armies during their temporary occupation; it ran from Shkodër to Durrës, with a branch to Tirana.

Every type of unwritten law has been constantly recast, added to, and restated down the centuries by a body of experts drawn from the rank of rulers. This rank exists because the mountaineers came to realize that an entity which is divided against itself cannot stand. Consequently, in every social unit—in house and village as in tribe or group of villages—the principle of subordination to a supreme head was accepted. In a household the headship is hereditary, with an important qualification. As the mountaineers are aware that

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592 a first-born may be inefficient, the mantle of a dead or dying head falls on the son who in the opinion of all the adult males in the household is the best fitted to keep it together, irrespective of whether he is the eldest or not.[1] This combination of birth and unanimity of choice gives these heads the strength of inevitability, so that they can be neither envied nor rebelled and intrigued against, but must be recognized and implicitly obeyed by their subordinates—a most important factor in keeping the peace.

619 622 Before the Turks left in 1912, the headship of a northern village or tribe descended in the same family, always to the head it had chosen for itself. Since 1912 successive Albanian governments have slightly modified this system. In non-tribal areas like Mat, Martanesh and Shpat there has been less need for a change; as far back as we can go, the head of the average village or group of villages has been elected by the community for his personal [564] qualities in the same way as the head of a house. A few villages of Mat, however, had long been ruled by the landlords (*begs* or *beys*) who owned them; after 1912 the power of these landlords, the Zogu family excepted, was curtailed by the central government like that of the bajraktars of the north.

692 695 [623] In the old days the laws were administered as well as enacted or revised by the ruling rank, who were collectively known as elders. The system was elaborate, with public trials over which elders presided, and at which evidence was taken from witnesses on oath as well as from the plaintiff and the accused, and a jury might be 681 asked to render a verdict. Fines were the usual penalty for petty misdemeanours, and temporary banishment, permanent expulsion or death for serious offences; a modified form of imprisonment 671 also existed. Offences against the cohesion of the social fabric, as 673 understood by the mountaineers, were reckoned more serious than crimes against an individual. Thus parricide was graver than fratricide; the first struck a blow at parental authority, an essential part of the social structure, but since one brother had no right to rule another except in special cases, fratricide was little worse than an ordinary murder and hardly a public concern.[2] The murder of a neighbour or the theft of his property seldom entered the serious category until the criminal became an habitual offender. Then the community, regarding the man as a social menace from whom none of its members was safe, took whatever action the law laid down for his case.

[1] See Chapter V.

[2] See Chapter V, p. 38.

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his unmarried sister or his widowed, childless sister. In that event, while the younger women worked outside, his mother, if physically fit, remained at home to cook, sweep and bake, besides attending to the dairy and poultry. She also saw that any children who were big enough to walk but too small to follow their mother to the fields, did not fall into the fire or otherwise come to grief. She further entertained any men visitors who might come when her son was absent. She did not, however, wash her clothes or her husband's, should he be still alive, for even at the height of the busy season outside that was one of her daughter-in-law's duties. When she was no longer strong enough for her various tasks, she was sent out, complete with distaff, to herd the goats or plough-oxen and another woman succeeded her as housekeeper.

If the married pair had a separate bedroom, it was private property, as inviolable as a separate house would be, and no one other than the man and his wife and children might enter uninvited. Unless she was his wife, even the housekeeper was under the ban. It followed that when a wife worked outside, she must care herself for her bedroom, sweeping it, spreading the bedding at night, and picking this up again in the morning. She must also tend her children, and wash and mend their clothes, her husband's and her own, besides those of her mother-in-law. If she had a tiny baby, she carried it in its cradle on her back to the fields, left it in a shady place while she worked, and carried it home again in the evening.

If the house was too small to have a sitting-room, the husband ate in the kitchen. He never lingered over the meal, and in most districts ate alone unless his mother, privileged by having brought him into the world, wished to join him. A man who ate with his wife or sat much in her company courted public ridicule as unmanly and 'no class'. If there was a sitting-room, the husband probably took his midday meal in the kitchen and his evening meal in the sitting-room. Before supper he might invite his sons or even his daughters, if these were small, to share the comfort of the sitting-room for a little.

Peasant households with only one man in them were rare, since for economic reasons it was customary for several brothers or even several first cousins to live together until their children were of an age to marry. Then sheer pressure of population compelled the household to split up into smaller units, each with a house of its own.[1]

[1] See Chapter VI.

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When the men in a household were numerous, three or more might be shepherds, one tending the sheep, another the goats, and a third the oxen; several might be farmers who ploughed and hoed and irrigated; yet others might be housemen, one keeping the house supplied with firewood, a second going to the bazaar, and a third grinding grain at the local mill for the household's bread. Each thus contributed his quota to the family wealth, and obviously the more numerous the quotas, the greater the general comfort. A well-to-do household which had only a few men might make up the number of hands available by engaging servants. 'Çota's tableful' is now proverbial in Çermenikë because eighteen men—ten relatives and eight hirelings—used to sit down nightly to supper in Sali Çota's house in the village of Fenars in that district. If, however, a household were poor as well as small, it could not risk having to pay servants in a bad year, and must restrict its activities—for example, by keeping only sheep or goats but not both. Since sheep eat grass and goats leaves, they must have separate herds.

Even in the richest of these multiple households the women lived much as they did in small, poor ones. A housekeeper, who was generally elderly, cooked and baked for the whole family, swept the kitchen, the men's sitting-room, and her own bedroom if she had one apart from the kitchen, but did not enter any room belonging to a married man, even if he was her son. The young wives worked out of doors when required and at all times looked after their children, husband and bedroom. They were often exempt from fetching firewood and water and were reasonably fed and dressed, but otherwise fared no better than their poorer sisters. By and large, even in these relatively more leisured homes, women worked much harder than men. The latter excused their comparative idleness by saying that in Turkish times, when blood feuds raged, it had been death for most men to show their faces outside in the daytime, and if the family was not to die of starvation the women had to work for its bread. They claimed that when blood feuds grew rarer, they became more industrious. But they could never produce any evidence that the women had gained by their new diligence.

Soon after sunset the men sat down to sup at the same table in the sitting-room, while the women and children ate at another table in the kitchen. The food was brought to the sitting-room by

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the housekeeper who remained discreetly out of sight behind the door where she handed it to the men. She must wash up but warned by the proverb which says of work done badly by firelight because there are no lamps, 'Evening's work, morning's laugh', she waited till the next day. Then her task was much less formidable than one might think. At both the men's and the women's table everybody ate out of a common dish, fingers were used for a meat course, and one and the same wooden spoon dealt with soup and any semi-liquid food that followed. The men generally had their own spoons as they thought this more hygienic; they washed them themselves—rather sketchily—immediately after supper, and tucked them into their breast, ready for the next meal at home or at a friend's. If coffee was served, the master of the house or his deputy rinsed out the cups, for the precious utensils must never leave the sitting-room in case the women took to drinking coffee. Twenty men could sup on soup, meat, bread, curds and coffee without the housekeeper's having more than three centre dishes and the dining-table to wash.

A multiple household might contain as many as twenty persons, a goodly enough number but only a pale reflexion of past glories. All over north Albania it used to be the custom for brothers, first and even second cousins to live with their wives and children, and probably several aged uncles and aunts and young sisters, under the same roof. Enormous housefuls sometimes resulted. For instance, there were sixty-four people in Gjon Macaj's house in Perlat about 1900, ninety-five in Isuf Isaku's in Zdrâjshë in 1923, and seventy in Lushan Sadrija's in Shalë even more recently. The houses themselves, though conforming to the regulation pattern of men's sitting-room, kitchen, stables, store-rooms, and one bedroom for every family unit, were remarkably small by our standards. Quite a little bedroom suffices for seven or eight persons if they all sleep on the floor, and both the sitting-room and the kitchen often served as dormitories, the former for men guests and the unmarried or widowed men of the family and the latter for women guests and the widows of the family. The primary cause of this way of life was the lack of public security in former times. Enemies and bandits could wreak their will on a single-handed man, but had to respect one surrounded by well-armed guards, and these the trustiest possible, his nearest relatives. After Albania became independent, public security improved so much that the need for a family to see

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592 to its own safety disappeared, and with it the need for several generations to huddle together under one roof if they wished to survive. Consequently, immense households like that of Gjon Macaj disappeared.

In the families of the landed gentry of Dibër such as Cen Elezi, life followed rather different lines. Most of the young men went into government or army service and left their wives and children at home, visiting them when they obtained leave, and the farm work was done by hired servants with the help and under the supervision of any of the family who might have remained at home. The women were organized on the customary pattern, with some variation in detail. A housekeeper cooked, but only for the women and children, since a special chef was required to cope with the hospitable requirements of the *selamlik*.[1] Each young wife attended to her own room and children besides cleaning her husband's boots and helping him to dress when he was at home. No one was required to work outside, but each must in turn wash up after meals for a week at a time. The daughters of such families were often less fortunate in their lives than the daughters-in-law. For want of suitors of their father's standing they must often be given to men of lower rank and then they worked both in and out of doors as if born and bred in a poor family.

Every house containing two or more married men included a corresponding number of family units. Each of these looked on its own members as we should do—as father, mother, son, daughter, brother and sister—but in its attitude to the other units diverged
601 from our practice. To us the oldest men may be brothers or cousins; to Albanians they were all 'brothers', irrespective of whether one father had begotten them or not. In the next generation instead of first cousins and in the third, second cousins, Albanians saw only 'brothers' and 'sisters' in both. The middle generation of Albanians regarded all its elders as 'uncle' or 'aunt' (though in some, particularly in Moslem, cases distinguishing between the paternal and maternal lines) and all its juniors as 'nephew' or 'niece'. It was only when some need to particularize arose that they defined the relationship according to the blood tie as 'father's brother', 'father's brother's wife', 'brother's son', 'cousin' or the like.

593 Not only did a man who was seen much in his wife's company lose face, but in a communal household his brothers, in addition to

[1] See p. 21.

1 [i.e., the men's apartments] 1

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CHAPTER V

THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE

592 Some co-ordinating authority is obviously necessary when many workers, most of them occupied with different duties, live under the same roof. The Unwritten Law therefore requires that in each family there shall be a patriarchal system of government, with one man master of the house and everybody else subordinate to him.

When there was only one man in a house, he became automatically its unquestioned master. If he died while his children were small, his brother or, much less often, his wife's brother saw to the family until the eldest boy grew old enough to take charge as master. When there were two or more men in a household, the master was elected, not born, to his position. Most frequently he was chosen in early youth by his predecessor, but should the latter die prematurely, he was elected at a general meeting of the men of the household. The women were not invited to this meeting nor were their views ascertained. The former method was preferred because it enabled the future master to be trained by his predecessor with incessant talk about the matters that would fall within his competence—relations with the authorities, relations with neighbours, household management, laws on roads, field boundaries, pasturage rights and so on. If he had to be elected by the household, he must rely on his own good sense and experience, supplemented by consultations with his subordinates or neighbours. Since its publication in 1933 Father Gjeçov's book on Lek's Kanùn has become available for reference, but previously heads of households had only the unwritten laws for guidance.

When a new master was being chosen, primogeniture was one of [88] the factors taken into consideration. Albanians regarded their elders with deference and, consequently, obeyed them more willingly. A very young master, however, such as might emerge from exclusive reliance on the accident of birth, could be a misfortune for his family.

Primogeniture, however, counted for nothing compared to administrative qualities such as knowledge of the law, shrewd judgement, even temper and fair-mindedness. A reigning master

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would pass over any or all of his own sons in favour of his younger brother or nephew if the latter promised to be a better administrator. Ymer Tullumi of Bujars in Shpat was a case in point. His father made him heir over the heads of his two elder brothers, and in his own old age, being childless, he selected as his successor, not his oldest nephew or the eldest son of his eldest brother, but the most intelligent among his nephews. For the same reason a master whose powers had been dimmed by years or illness generally resigned his position to his successor, although he was legally entitled to remain master as long as he lived.

In his relations with the authorities and the neighbours, the master had to do his best for the family. He tried, for instance, to get the burden of taxation and unpaid labour on government roads lightened, or, better still, shelved altogether; here he might find some degree of literacy useful, though it was otherwise superfluous. To keep on good terms with the neighbours he restrained his subordinates from provocative acts such as stealing or trespassing, and if a quarrel broke out he tried to settle it before it reached the shooting stage, which was always a nuisance to everybody concerned. At home he tried to keep the domestic wheels well oiled, soothing the quarrelsome, reasoning with the disgruntled, never showing anger real or feigned, assigning to each worker, whether man or woman, a daily task. In practice the last point seldom required thinking out, since each man had early specialized as ploughman, shepherd, cow-herd or odd man. If 'hands' were few, the master must work himself; if they were numerous, he confined himself to general supervision and planning of the work of the others. His chief duty was then to see that the fields were properly tilled and the flocks well cared for. In some districts, when temporary labourers had been hired for a special job, the master of a household so big that he did not normally work with his own hands ceased to supervise the workers and joined them as one of themselves. This was regarded as gracious condescension on his part and stimulated the hired men to greater effort.

The master's rule over his household was absolute and extended to every aspect of its life. Unless he first consented, no other man might stay away from work, leave the farm for a day's outing, accept employment elsewhere, or even call in a doctor to attend to his sick child; no boy or girl might be betrothed; no child might be hired out, apprenticed, or sent to school; no woman except his

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mother and others in her position, such as his uncle's elderly widow, might go to spend the night in her father's house. This gave him complete control over the time of the workers of the household. Whatever task he assigned the other men and the women must be performed without cavil; they must not only work as he said but go where he bade them and even marry when and whom he pleased. He spoke of them as 'my people' in English or 'my folk' in American parlance. When obliged to speak of them to the authorities or neighbours, he called any young man 'my son', any girl 'my daughter', and any married woman 'my wife' or 'my old woman'. No decent Albanian, it should be noted, ever mentions the women of his household to outsiders except under compulsion.

The master had also sole control of the family purse. Any money earned by the other men by the sweat of their brow or a windfall like a tip must be paid over to him and spent for the family's benefit. For, says the law, 'the earnings of a son are shared by his father and brothers'. Here the words 'father', 'son' and 'brothers' have not only the narrow application which we English give, but also the wider Albanian sense of relatives in the older or younger generation.[1] The farm was registered in the Land Office and popularly spoken of under the master's name, but this was only for convenience. It was owned jointly by all the men on it, and the master did not own a blade of grass more than the others did. Yet in virtue of his position he need not consult any of them if he wished to buy or sell a field, vineyard, wood or portion of irrigation water. The right to buy and sell was his alone. There were only two limitations on this right, both deriving from the simple good sense that underlies all the unwritten laws. He could not sell a sheep or goat without first securing the shepherd's permission, and if the latter preferred to give him another animal, he must accept it, for the shepherd knew the flock better than he did. Secondly, the farmer of the family, having sole charge of the plough-oxen, did not require to ask his leave if he wished to help a neighbour with his ploughing, to lend the oxen, or even to give them away outright.

As keeper of the purse the master generally went to market himself with whatever produce was for sale, and bought what he thought necessary with the proceeds. It was his duty to see that everybody in the house was as well shod and dressed as the

[1] See p. 30.

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family's means permitted, and that there was a sufficiency of coffee, sugar and cigarettes to maintain its dignity with visitors. He must also pay government dues and instalments of the price of any bride who was marrying into the family. Until the newer ways of to-day came in, he had further to buy a rifle for every youth in the family who came of military age. If he sent another man to market in his stead, as he was entitled to do, he often put a reserve price on the produce and always instructed his deputy about what he was to buy. On his return the latter must give a full account of his stewardship, saying what he had received for the produce and what he had spent, proving that he had made no unauthorized purchases, and handing over the remaining money intact. If the master grew so physically incapacitated that he could no longer make the long, arduous journey over the mountains to market (*pazàr*), he usually appointed one of the others, preferably the future master, to the permanent post of 'bazaar-man'. The latter then kept the family purse, but in other respects remained subordinate to the master.

It resulted naturally from the master's hold on the family purse that only he could lend money or contract a debt recoverable in law. If any of his subordinates made a loan or pledged the family credit on behalf of a friend, the borrower might lawfully repudiate the debt on the plea that it was not lawfully contracted. Generally, however, the master first scolded the culprit well for transgressing the law and then told the borrower that the loan was made on his authority, so leaving him no option but to repay it. In the same way, when subordinates borrowed, both they and the master were within their rights if they said the loan was illegally contracted and refused to repay it. More often than not, for the honour of the family, the master paid up. Again, in such matters as going surety for a loan, a woman's chastity, or a man's life, which were great features of Albanian life, only the master might act, subject to one exception. Each man's rifle and revolver were his personal property—to keep, to barter, to sell or to pledge without any reference to the master. Consequently, each subordinate might go surety up to the value of his arms. He usually did so with circumspection, however, for if he lost them he must not ask the master to replace them. The master was also responsible for any material damage done to a neighbour by his subordinates. If, for instance, they had stolen or killed a cow, or had set fire to a haystack, it was

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he who must find the money for compensating the injured neighbour. He sought it naturally in the common purse according to the law that 'the mishaps of a son are shared by his father and brothers'. If however, a subordinate killed a neighbour, it was just as likely that he himself or another subordinate would have to pay the penalty of a life for a life as that the master would have to do so. Presumably this anomalous division of responsibility arose because if the master alone were responsible for a murder, he would be so closely guarded that there would be no catching him and the murdered man's death would remain unavenged.[1]

Though the master's authority, resting as it did on his customary and traditional acceptance as his predecessor's choice or on his election by general consent of the household, was essentially moral, it was also backed by certain powers of enforcement. He had the right to beat a culprit, to leave him hungry, or to tie him up in a room or cellar until he came to a more proper frame of mind. This applied equally to the women; in fact, the commonest victim of tying up in a cellar was a girl who had jibbed at a proposed marriage. When a subordinate was grossly at fault and seemed incorrigible, the master might threaten to give him his portion and turn him out to fend for himself, and if the man did not reform, he would carry out the threat. In Krujë the author was present when a father expelled one of his sons for killing the other. In Turkish times the master had another salutary form of punishment at his disposal. This was taking away a culprit's arms for a week or two, so reducing him to the status of women and greybeards. 'Once shamed, twice shy' was almost invariably the result. But the best of masters might be helpless with a shiftless subordinate who had grown too old to beat. So long as the latter avoided gross misdemeanours like murder, he might idle with impunity. For physical reasons the master could not force him to work, and except in extreme cases the Unwritten Law disapproved of turning him out to sink or swim as an angry English parent might do.[2] The law said

[1] It is perhaps more likely that this vicarious responsibility of any member of the family instead of the master only is the survival of the more ancient practice unmodified by more civilized conventions. It is typical of the blood feud in more primitive societies than that of Albania. (Ed.)

[2] In Montenegrin tribal law the disobedient son might be fined the first time, confined and beaten the second and third time, and only expelled after that, expulsion involving disinheritance. *Vide* Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, p. 84. (Ed.)

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it was the offender's birthright to remain in the house, to eat at the common table, and to have his wife and children maintained out of the family purse. A striking illustration of this weakness of the communal system was to be seen in Shalë in the 1930's, when Mirash Nue's family included his wife, his elder son Pal, Pal's wife and four children, and his younger son Gjon. Since he, Mirash, was too old to work and Pal was a wastrel, Gjon alone ploughed to feed the household and fetched firewood to keep it warm. To get money for government taxes and his father's coffee and cigarettes, he worked for the priest in his spare time. He had been unable to earn enough to pay for a bride and at thirty years of age was still unmarried, a calamity in primitive Albanian eyes. Pal, not criminal, just lazy and selfish, and saved from beating by his father's advanced years and his own age, paid no attention to either his father's upbraidings or the barely concealed contempt of the neighbours and turned up unfailingly for the meals he had done nothing to provide.

The master received no money payments for his services but enjoyed certain privileges. His clothes were often newer and of better cloth than those of his subordinates; more silver chains crossed his breast, and more silver rings glittered on his fingers. He was entitled to have his own bedding and coffee utensils and to keep them until he died. If he chose to buy himself a riding horse, a watch, or arms richly inlaid with silver and bright stones, he might do so. His subordinates, though left to walk while he rode, to learn the time from the sun by day and from the crowing of a cock at night, and to content themselves with the plainest of rifles and revolvers, did not seem to resent his magnificence. He represented the family, and the worthier he appeared in externals as well as in mind and character, the greater the glory reflected on each of them.

Indoors the master sat in the place of honour in the sitting-room, the right-hand chimney corner as one looked from the fireplace towards the door. Though marked deference was usually shown to old people, he never gave up this place to his aged father or elder brother except in the districts of Shpat, Çermenikë and Shalë, where age took precedence over social position. The other men grouped themselves cross-legged in front of the fire, the future master facing it squarely, older men flanking him, and younger men sitting behind him. The youngest of all, who had to do such work as shutting the door, bringing firewood, and carrying in supper, sat next to the door; he was described as the serving man. When

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the master entered, all rose to their feet and remained standing until he was seated. If he was armed, one of them relieved him of his rifle, hung it on a peg by the door, and turned to see if he wanted to keep his side-arms or to have them hung up beside the rifle. As soon as he settled down he made himself a cup of coffee, rolled and lit a cigarette, and perhaps pulled a small bottle of raw spirit (*raki*) from his pocket. If in a gracious mood, he might make a cup of coffee for the older men and the master designate and let them smoke or even suck at his raki bottle, but if he wished he might lawfully reserve these joys for himself. In any event the younger men might neither drink nor smoke in his presence, though they could do both elsewhere. If he chose to make conversation, the others must follow his lead; if he preferred to remain silent, they could not speak—like good children they must remain seen but not heard. When supper came, no one might put his spoon into the common dish until he had done so. When the time came to leave the room, he led the way as he did when walking through the fields. In the house this indicated his pre-eminence; in the fields it was also a security measure. The others strung out behind him at specified intervals, on the assumption that he could deal himself with a frontal attack but needed to have his back protected by friends.

Given his duties, rights and privileges, the master soon acquired an air of command, whereas his subordinates, condemned for ever to show no initiative, shrank progressively into complete nonentities as their youthful qualities atrophied for want of exercise. But the master must not be tyrannical or unjust, spendthrift or careless of the general weal, and above all he must show no favouritism. If he developed such faults, the other men might lawfully depose him and elect another in his stead. However, the care taken initially in selecting him made such action extremely rare. A good master preferred the spirit to the letter of the law. For example, he rarely sold or bought any family possessions without first consulting his subordinates. And he was always careful not to destroy his subordinates' feeling that the farm and everybody and everything on it belonged to each of them individually as well as collectively, that the welfare of each of them concerned the whole family, and that the general welfare concerned each individual.[1]

[1] Thus a youth who obviously had nothing of his own was yet perfectly in order when he stated that he had just bought a field or even a bride for his brother.

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The master designate, who might be appointed 'bazaar-man' in the master's lifetime, sat in a place of some honour, and might be given coffee and cigarettes while other men went without. Often, too, he was deputed to make the coffee and to lead the conversation with a guest. This was training for him and practice in family manners for his future subordinates. When the master was not present, all the duties and privileges of headship were his. During wedding celebrations no one might join a ring dance, however much he wished to do so, unless commanded by the master or in his absence by the master designate.

There is little to add to what has already been said about the subordinate men in a communal household. Each was head of his own particular family, with full powers to chastise both wife and children, though not to direct their lives and work—that was the master's business. An older man was further regarded as a father by his juniors. This principle was carried so far in Mirditë, though not elsewhere, that he might lawfully reprimand and even beat a junior's wife and children. The junior could not retaliate in kind, for the law holds it criminal to strike a 'father's' wife. In other respects it was a subordinate's whole duty to obey the master.

As for the women in a communal household, the master governed them through the housekeeper: under her official style of mistress of the house she transmitted his orders to the other women or gave them her own and supervised their indoor work. When they were working outside, the master or a man deputizing for him must oversee them, for a mistress worked only in the house and farmyard. She was appointed by the master and was not necessarily his wife. Like him, she must rule justly, moderately, and impartially, taking special pains to avoid favouring her own children, and if his wife did not possess these qualities, he passed her over and chose another. In no case did a mistress have as much authority as the master; she had none at all outside her own departments, and in these must at all times work under his orders. Nor might she buy, sell or barter so much as an egg on her own responsibility. Her tenure of office was also much shorter. Since strong young women must do farm work, she was seldom appointed until nearing forty, and since her duties were manifold and heavy, especially in summer owing to the absence of the other women, she was superseded about fifty when her physical strength began to wane. Her only privilege, but one for which she was much envied by the other women, was

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592 to work indoors. Her clothes were no better than theirs; indeed, if she had dairy work to do, they were usually dirtier. If she was unjust and ill-tempered, pilfered or sold family property, or fomented rather than composed the quarrels that were endemic among the other women, the men assembled in general meeting and deposed her.[1]

562 593 It only remains to describe a small domain with which the master had nothing to do. In astonishing contrast to the penniless men, all the women had their own money and controlled it absolutely. Called *pekul*, from Lat. *peculium*, and essentially pin-money, they spent it on kerchiefs, gewgaws, and even clothes and shoes. Each received the first of it on the morning after her marriage, when her men relatives filed past her in farewell and dropped money into a plate for her. Afterwards her father or brother might slip a coin or two into her hand when he visited her. In the tribal districts of the north her father also gave her on her marriage as much as half of the money which her husband had paid him for her. Later on she might occasionally earn a few pence by knitting socks in her odd moments or making the rough home-spun trousers worn by peasants. Debarred by law and custom from taking the finished articles to market herself, she gave them to her father or brother to sell, but never to her husband or grown-up son, for they would not let her even see the money. If near a market-town, she might gather walnuts or hazel-nuts in the woods and send these to market. In tobacco-growing areas she normally got the coarse bottom leaves of the plants, to smoke or to [437] sell as she pleased. If she had none of these resources, she could only steal maize, eggs, wool or cheese from her husband's house and send a child to the shop to barter them for what she wished to have; she was bound to pay in kind or money, for the law forbade her to pledge either her husband's or her father's credit. On these occasions neither her father nor her brother would act as her agent, for if such connivance in her pilfering were discovered, they would be in serious trouble with her husband's family. If she chose to keep her *pekul* idle, she might safely lock it up in her dowry-chest in her room; her husband never seemed to make her give it up and no others might enter their room. Generally, however, she made the money fructify. In southern areas like Çermenikë she lent it at the usual rate of interest, which was 30% (enough to compensate

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[1] The author never heard, however, of this being done.

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power by modern governments. The value of the difference to the servant was that the more important his master, the better he himself was protected.

It is the rule in all denominations that priests may not carry arms. This is no drawback to anybody under a modern administration, but in Turkish times it meant that a priest's servant was more exposed to danger than an armed layman's. The Catholic church tried to make up for the deficiency by special legislation of which Father Gjeçov gives a full account. Thus, though a priest's servant had a certain freedom to attend to his own business, any message he carried to a house was treated as coming from the priest. Whoever molested him molested the priest, and might be fined according to the gravity of the offence but not less than ten lambs, which went, not to the servant, but to the church and tribe. Whoever killed the servant started a feud with his family only, if the servant were local, but with the whole parish if he were a stranger—here can be recognized the principle of the community's guest—and if the murderer was local, the parish burned his house and took a hundred lambs and an ox from him as fine. If labourers hired by the church were molested, the offender had to pay a fine, divisible between them and the church; the more numerous they were, the heavier the fine; on an average this amounted to ten lambs. If an offender refused to pay, the parish went in a body and took what it wanted from his sheepfold. In short, the church treated any wrong to a defenceless priest's servant as a major crime.

The retainers of great men were essentially a bodyguard, and were only maintained by men with blood feuds. Some lived at home and joined their patron for some special, and usually brief, occasion; others lived for long periods with him, constantly ready for whatever service he might ask. They occasionally received a gold piece as reward; more often they were paid in kind—by being lent money without interest for a funeral or a wedding feast, by being given grain in bad years, by having a useful word said in the ear of the authorities to extract them from some difficulty. While his own children were small, the Hereditary Captain of Mirditë had eight young relatives living permanently with him, brief holidays at home excepted. They waited at meals or carried messages to the servants with the lofty air of medieval pages of noble blood. Until exiled during the war of 1939–45, Shevqet Vërlaci, the formidable Bey of Elbasan, was guarded night and day by relays of peasants

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592 from his own farms, who spent weeks at a time with him. During the same period every notable from Dibër who visited Tirana called at least six peasant neighbours to come and escort him there and back. If his stay in the capital were short, they saw him safely home; if long, they were relieved by others at intervals. Needless to say, all retainers were crack shots.

Finally, the protected might also be the protector. In the 1930's Hamit Callaku, an influential notable of Fulqet, had a notorious murderer from Çermenikë living with him for nothing except the assurance that so long as he kept Hamit's enemies at a distance the former would prevent the authorities from arresting him.

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CHAPTER VI

THE SEPARATION OF BROTHERS

In spite of the modernization which Albanian laws had undergone since 1912, brothers still separated according to the laws they had learned from their fathers. The only change introduced by the civil code adapted from the Swiss models was that economic provision must now be made for the daughters of the family, who had formerly been given only a nominal sum when their father's home was broken up.

There were several reasons for breaking up an old home. When a communal household was already full of men, each with his wife and children, it could no longer spare a room for each boy as he grew up and married. Some of the men must hive off, although many disliked the idea of separating from their brothers. As the Albanian proverb says, 'When the hive is full the bees must swarm'.

Quarrelling was another cause of separation. Often the brothers themselves quarrelled, the younger resenting the elder's control of his person and of the family purse, or 'the devil entering both their hearts' they quarrelled about nothing. In the latter case climate might play a role. Theth, for example, lay so high that the peasants were confined to their houses for several months each winter. Then brother got on brother's nerves, high words were spoken and the younger demanded a separation or the elder threatened to expel him. When the milder weather came to release them from confinement, their tempers cooled, but each was too proud to retract the word he had spoken in haste. A financial cause operated in villages near towns, such as Godolesh and Shijan near Elbasan. With the bazaar at hand each brother wanted to control the purse, which he could not do unless he had a separate establishment. Often too brothers must separate because their wives quarrelled. The companionship enforced by communal life naturally bore harder on the women who lacked the blood tie and similarity of upbringing that might neutralize clashes of temperament among the men. Occasionally brothers separated while their father was still alive. If this was their own wish they lost face and

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were publicly mocked as 'low-class fellows'. Sometimes they had no choice, being so disobedient and unruly that their father compelled them to leave his house. Or they got on so badly with each other that he feared there would be murder done.

Three factors militated against separation. There was the sense of family which was so strong that four or five generations, numbering twenty souls or more, might live under one roof. Secondly, it was economically to the advantage of each man that the household should remain together. In a large household all branches of the pastoral and agricultural life were possible, but in a small one activities must be restricted; one and the same person could not tend cows and oxen, ewes and lambs. With good reason the proverb says 'Separation ruins a family'. In the bad old days too, it was strategically good for brothers to stick together; the more guns in a house the stronger it was.

When separation had been decided on, the family possessions were divided equally without any regard for primogeniture. Everything that could be eaten or drunk—dairy produce, grain, haricot beans, eggs, honey, raki—was considered food and divided equally among the mouths to be fed, and everything else—land, livestock, farm implements, house, household utensils—was considered property and divided equally between the brothers.

The law of food, as expanded, laid down that every living soul in the house on the day of separation, male and female, sick and well, greybeard and infant drawing its first breath, should receive the same share of food. Supposing one of the two brothers had besides his wife ten children, and the other two, the first received twelve portions of food and the second four. Then the age clause was variously interpreted. In Dibër even a child still in the womb was allotted a full portion, but elsewhere one born so little as an hour after the conclusion of the separation received nothing and the prospective father naturally tried to protect himself against this loss by delaying the separation, if possible, until the child had been born. In Lumë and Mirditë a child less than a year old was not given food, the idea being that its mother's milk would suffice for it throughout the coming year—partly to avoid conception Albanian children were everywhere suckled until they were three years of age. In other areas a new-born child received its quota on the assumption that before a year was out it would 'eat a little, spill a little and let the cat eat a little'. Separation generally, though not

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invariably, took place immediately after harvest when bins were full and a year must pass before the fields again yielded a crop.

Although food supply was divided in most areas into equal portions irrespective of total quantity, in the Malësi e Madhe each person received three loads of maize, which was considered to be enough food for a year. Any surplus was sold and the proceeds divided among the brothers. In other areas a surplus rarely existed, so the specification of quantity had never been made.

For the purposes of separation the term 'grain' included not only maize and wheat but also everything that grew in a field or garden, such as fruit and vegetables. Exceptionally, in Gjadolesh both olives and butter were regarded as property and divided equally, not among the number of souls, but among the brothers. In Perlat raki and wine were divided equally among all who drank, some of the men did not drink and some of the women did. Sometimes a woman tried to secure a double share of drink for her husband by alleging falsely that she herself drank. The attempt was usually frustrated by the other women, who, not wishing to see their husbands go shorter than they should, exposed her fraud. In rare instances where drinking water was divided, it was treated like food.

Property, said the law, was to be divided equally among the brothers. This applied only to property inherited by the father; the number of children belonging to each brother was not considered. One of two might have seven children and the other three, but each received exactly half the property. The only exception recorded is in Martanesh, where a brother with many mouths to feed might be given a little extra food on condition of accepting a little less land. It followed that the brother with the large family was much worse off initially, though eventually, as his children grew old enough to work, he might catch up the other because he would have more hands at work. No doubt it was this balance of initial poverty against subsequent wealth that led the old law-givers to enact this law of equal division of property among brothers. It was also immaterial that one of the brothers had a grown son; the son counted in the division of food but not in that of property.

A dead brother was ignored when the food was divided, but if he had left a son, his rights to an equal share of the property remained intact. It descended to his son, who, irrespective of his age, ranked on separation day as his father's representative and the

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428 592 equal of each of his father's brothers. Supposing the dead man had been one of four brothers, the three survivors and his orphan son each received one-quarter of the property. If he had left two sons, these became joint owners of his quarter share. Even if all the brothers in a communal household died before it split up, the principle of division was the same. Suppose they were three, and the eldest had ten male descendants, the second five and the third one, the property was divided into three equal parts, one for each of them, regardless of the disparity in the number of their descendants.

Division of food was relatively simple, a matter of arithmetic—so many souls, so many portions. The process of division of property was much more complicated, a thing of exact measurements and difficult calculations. As a first step the land was measured with a rope and divided into as many equal parts as there were brothers. Occasionally it was measured by pacing, the man who paced clasping his hands behind his back to steady himself and so to keep his paces equal.

When the quality of the land was uniform there was no difficulty about the actual partition by these methods. But it might happen that one field or one part of a field was better than another. Good and bad must nevertheless be shared alike by the brothers. To make this possible, what may be called the system of 'offset or compensation' came into play. Most commonly a smaller field or a smaller portion of the same field was given to the brother who got the better land, and a larger field or larger portion of the same field to the one who got the worse. The basis of calculation was the average yield of the land, this being common knowledge in the district. Size was thus offset against quality. Less often the portions were valued and the brother who got the better one paid compensation to the other; the latter was theoretically supposed to spend the money on buying himself a piece of land somewhere else.

423 428 The term 'land' included arable land, vineyards, vegetable gardens, orchards, hay meadows and enclosed lowland pastures, all of which must be divided up when the brothers separated. It did not include mountain pastures or woods and forest for firewood, fodder and timber. These remained undivided, common property for the common use of the brothers. It was rare, however, to find a joint household owning mountain pastures and forests, for these were generally held in common by a whole ward or even a whole

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village. In Çermenikë all the brothers were allowed to graze their sheep after harvest on a divided arable field as they did when it was whole and they were together; it was immaterial that one had a bigger flock than the other. At least it was immaterial in theory, but in practice they sometimes quarrelled over the grazing. Then each must set a shepherd on his own boundary to watch over his interests. Presumably the impossibility of providing shepherds enough to guard the wide boundaries of forests and mountain pastures has prevented these pieces of property from being divided up.

Two curiosities of land division are to be noted: if an arable field was very narrow, it must be divided short-ways, for if divided long-ways, the plough-oxen might not have room to turn when ploughing; sometimes, too, three brothers who were separating amicably might wish to have each of their father's fields divided in three rather than each receive one field apiece. A day might come when one of them might wish to sell his land, then there would be more inducement to keep it in the family if it immediately adjoined another brother's holding. They also wished, they said, to perpetuate the memory of their joint ownership of all the fields, and when one field was some way from another and in different hands, it was less easy to realize that once the same family had owned them all. If possible they would like to keep up their brotherly ties for a hundred years or more.

The division of the joint home was generally much more complicated. Supposing there were two brothers in a house consisting of only a sitting-room and a kitchen. By the partition method one was given the sitting-room and the other the kitchen. Since the sitting-room was manifestly superior it was valued together with the kitchen. The values were added, then divided into two, and the difference between half the total and the value of the kitchen was paid to the less lucky brother. The payment made, it was held that the old home had been equally divided between the brothers. Sometimes instead of money the offset system was used, a better portion of land being given to the brother who had received the worse part of the house. For this purpose the land as well as the house was valued, and if the former's total value was 26 napoleons, 14 napoleons' worth would go to the brother with the kitchen worth 6 and 12 napoleons' worth to the brother with the sitting-room worth 8, so giving each 20 napoleons' worth of property.

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Alternatively, both sitting-room and kitchen were measured with a rope and divided into two. A partition wall of lath and plaster or, more probably, of lath and mud was then run up in both. This left half of each with the old door and, where it existed, the old staircase, while the other two halves had neither door nor staircase; a new door and, if required, a new staircase, were built for these, generally on the opposite side of the house. Each brother then took possession of his new home, a small poor place but his own with its own egress to the outside world.

In the Mohammedan villages near Elbasan there were regulations about windows which aimed, like the building laws, at protecting women from prying eyes. In Godolesh the brother getting the upper room in a two-storeyed house was told to blind the windows overlooking the yard if his brother's kitchen, as was probable, opened on to this; otherwise his brother's womenfolk would not have full freedom to move about the yard. The brother getting the middle storey in a three-storeyed house was given similar instructions, but the brother with the topmost floor might leave all his windows open as they were too high to overlook the yard. In Labinot all windows overlooking another's property must, irrespective of their height, be blinded. Such regulations were not enforced in Christian villages.

When the old house had two rooms as well as a kitchen the division was less complicated. To begin with, one room was assigned to each brother. If one was bigger than the other they were both valued and due compensation paid to the brother with the smaller one. As for the kitchen, either it was divided in two or it was given to one brother and its estimated value paid to the other so that he could build a new kitchen for himself on his own land.

Continuing to live under the same roof imposed certain mutual obligations on the brothers. If the flimsy partition wall or the roof needed repairs, both must share the expense in equal proportions. If one could not or would not pay his quota the other was entitled to repair only his own section of the roof, leaving his brother's to the ravages of the weather; or he might try to extract the money from his brother by force; until lately, he might even shoot him in truculent Lumë. As for the partition wall, he probably repaired it at his own expense for the sake of his personal privacy.

To avoid such quarrels and to secure more houseroom the buying out method of dividing the old home was preferred. The

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

building itself was allotted to one of the brothers, almost everywhere the youngest, who became its sole owner and master. But he must pay each of his brothers a proportionate share of its value, half if he had only one brother, a third if he had two and so on. Sometimes two brothers who had decided to divide the old house with a partition wall, according to the first method of division, quarrelled irreconcilably about the position of this wall. Then they might switch over to the second method, one buying out the other. If they could not afford to do this, one might legally pull down his own section of the house, take away the timber and stones, and build himself a new house on his own land.

Sometimes four brothers separated two by two, one pair remaining in the old home and the other going out. In that case the former paid between them half the assessed value of the house to the outgoing pair. Sometimes the four separated one by one, two remaining in the old home as before and two going out. In this case the old home was divided by a partition into two portions, one for each of the two brothers remaining in it and one-quarter of its value was taken from each of them and given to each outgoing brother.

In Dibër and Perlat, possibly elsewhere, the outgoing brothers received an extra portion of land as a site for the house they must build. In Perlat a distinction was made between irrigable and non-irrigable land. The extra portion given in the case of the latter, which was nearly worthless, might amount to as much as 120 *pashë*.

Almost everywhere the old home was valued as it stood, but a system not recorded elsewhere prevailed in Perlat. This took no account of the timber, stones and mud (for mortar) which went to the building of the house because these cost nothing but labour, and the labour had been provided as a joint enterprise by the family when still united. (But the brothers, remembering what the mason who built the house had been paid, divided that sum equally between themselves; it was generally no more than 6 or 7 napoleons.) As usual, the brother allotted the house paid cash to his outgoing brothers. The drawback to this system was that it did not provide for fluctuations in the value of money.

The old house was generally given to the youngest because he was thought too young to be able to build one for himself. 'The man who has not built himself a house or celebrated his daughter's wedding does not know what trouble is', runs the proverb. The

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

[591] a woman was the sole survivor of her family and so inherited its property.

It was on the principle of father's property—or very much more rarely mother's—that big households containing several sets of cousins split up. They went back to their common ancestor, ascertained what property he had had, and divided that equally among his sons. The descendants of each son then took their portion and no more, regardless of their number. Supposing a man had had three sons who in their turn had respectively five, three and two sons. When these cousins separated the five sons of the eldest brother received only one-third of their grandfather's property, no more and no less than the amount received by the three sons of the second and the two sons of the third brother.

The question of the father's property came up again when a man died childless after separating from his brothers. For instance, if four brothers all separated they divided the dead man's property equally as having been originally their father's. If three were living together apart from the fourth who had died childless, they took his property back into the common fund, and when they separated divided it equally with their other possessions. If one of the three who lived together died childless, the two surviving took his property back into the common fund and when they separated divided it equally between themselves, but they did not give any to the fourth brother because he had separated from them before the death. Matters were usually complicated in Përlat and Mirditë when four brothers had separated into two pairs. If one died childless, any property which they had bought together was retained by the survivor of his pair, but what he had inherited went back into the stock of father's property and was divided into three portions, one for his survivor and two for the other pair. A rather better portion of land was given to his survivor in Perlat but apparently not in Mirditë.

[592] Money a man had earned away from home—as government official, gendarme, shopkeeper or servant—had to be sent home up to the date of separation. Then it was counted family earnings and put into the common purse on the plea that although he was away working his brothers were toiling at home. If he kept any back for some months before the expected separation, it was accounted stealing, and if he was only suspected of doing so, he might be put to the oath to clear himself. If livestock was bought with his money

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

was expected to behave reasonably; in Mirditë if she were a trouble-maker her son might legally send her back to her brother, giving her three loads of grain for her support during the first year and nothing afterwards. On her death she might be buried by the son she lived with, as in Zerqan, or by all the sons in combination, as in Martanesh and the Malësi e Madhe. Here good feeling rather than the law dictated the usage.

Sometimes a minor—a small brother or the orphan of a dead brother—had to be arranged for. The essential was that he should receive his portion and not be left alone with his mother, as she might induce him to sell his land or might herself take a lover. If his grandfather were alive he remained with him. Otherwise he went to live with an older brother or an uncle. Exceptionally, in Shijan he lived by preference with his mother's brother, less probably with his father's brother, and still less probably with his own brother. His guardian worked his land or gave it to a third party to work for an agreed return and fed and clothed the minor with its produce until he came of age at fifteen. The guardian had also to feed and clothe his mother and any small brothers and sisters he might have. Sometimes a guardian brother remained in the father's house with the minor. He was its master, though not its owner, until the minor came of age. Then he must leave the house to the minor and himself move to new quarters.

Sometimes brothers who had separated joined up again. The 'remarriage' seldom lasted long; as the proverb puts it, 'a loaf once broken can't be put together again'. When they separated for the second time, their food and property were divided on the same principles as before. Due note was taken of any house they might have built or any land or livestock they might have bought during their temporary reunion; these were divided as usual, not according to the number of brothers, but according to the number of men. If one brother had died childless since the first separation, a completely new division of the property was necessary.

The division of food and property might be effected by elders, by the eldest brother, by a neighbour, or by a more distant relative, or by the father if alive. The factors governing the choice of one or other were, as usual, based on common sense. The division of property, as distinct from food, was often so complicated that only experienced men like elders could grapple with it. A father tended to favour his best loved son or daughter-in-law and was often ruled

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

out for that reason. If the brothers were not on good terms, division by the eldest caused quarrelling, the others accusing him of robbing them and he retaliating in the usual manner. If they were on exceptionally bad terms, even distant relatives feared the unpleasantness that was bound to follow their best attempts at a fair division. For all these reasons the choice generally fell on elders. Their drawback was their need of a fee, but it was generally thought better to spend money on a fee than to quarrel with a brother. These principles were at the back of the various practices in different places. When the choice was between neighbours and relatives by marriage the latter were preferred because they were always more trusted. Each brother put in his own man.

In Perlat the father was never allowed to divide his property, elders or relatives on the male side must do so, and when they were at work, neither the father nor the sons might put in their word. In Martanesh the same fear of favouritism prevailed, and elders or the neighbours in bulk carried out the division. In south Dibër the local notables did so, their influence being thought to counteract any tendency to break the peace over the division. In Godolesh separation had always been on an official basis; it was arranged by the headman of the whole village and his two assistants, as it had been in Turkish times by the headman assisted by an elder from each of the six quarters of the village; it is to be noted that no fee was taken by these elders because separations had always been part of their official duties. In Shijan the separation might be entrusted to the husband's or wife's relatives since they were interested in preserving peace in the family, yet had no personal interest in the division. In any area, when brothers were on really bad terms, complete strangers from another village might be called in to arrange the separation.

When the brothers decided to engage elders, they engaged one between them if they were on good terms; if not, each put in his own man. In Mirditë they might engage two, four or more elders according to the amount of work to be done.

Portions were allocated to the brothers by their own choice or, more often, by lot. In the very few cases where the brothers were completely friendly, the eldest said to the youngest 'Which field will you have, this or that?' Then he took for himself what was left. If the second coveted the field chosen by the youngest, they drew

[1] [i.e., to divide the food and property of a household at the time of separation -- Analyst]

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

lots for it or asked elders to divide it. When the brothers were a degree less friendly but the eldest nevertheless divided the property, the youngest was given first choice of the portions, the next youngest the second choice and the eldest what was left. The law ran: 'the eldest divides, the youngest chooses.' It is obvious that the risk of getting an inferior portion made the eldest divide carefully. In Mirditë by exception it was the middle brother who had first choice.

Lots varied: in Lumë they were drawn in the modern method with pieces of paper; one without holes, another with one hole, the third with two holes, and so on; and by the old-fashioned with a stone, a twig and a clod of earth. In the Malësi e Madhe grains of maize, coins and weeds as well as paper were used. Shijan preferred straw and grass, and Godolesh grains of maize and haricot beans. Maize was satisfactory when there were two brothers, as one variety has white grains and the other yellow, but when there were three brothers, haricot beans, which may be white, black or mottled, were preferred. Somewhat curiously, though stones and sticks were both plentiful, they were seldom used. In Shijan, for example, the lots were drawn with elaborate care. One of the relatives present at the division was sent some distance away and told to keep his eyes closed. Each brother selected his token and handed it to another relative. The first was recalled, given the tokens, and told to place each where he chose. Each brother was expected to accept the luck which his token had brought him, but if one objected, lots were drawn a second or even a third time, fresh tokens being chosen and a different relative asked to drop them each time. The brother who got the disputed land or other property two out of three times became its owner for good. The various positions of land and livestock, the piles of farm implements and household utensils and the rooms in the house (if this was partitioned) were drawn for in the same way. In Martanesh the procedure was shorter but there was again, for greater fairness, a man between the brothers and the person who made the decisive throw. Each brother gave his token to one of the bystanders, who carried it to the elder dividing the property. In ignorance of which token belonged to whom the elder cast them on the various portions. In Zerqan there was again an intermediary. Each brother had a secret, unpaid representative who gave a stone to a third person approved by all the brothers but ignorant of who represented each.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

592 This third person threw the token stones on this portion or that.
428 In Godolesh there was no intermediary. Each brother gave his
592 token to an elder in whom they all had confidence. As they were
777 selecting their tokens, he arranged tokens of his own on the ground, naming each aloud for the various portions of the land or house. He carefully refrained from looking at the brothers' tokens and threw them blindly one after another on his own. 'Here is the sitting-room, good luck to it. Here is the kitchen, good luck to it', he said of the house. Each brother then claimed his token and accepted his portion. With a similar phrase of good omen the elder divided the land. In Lumë there might or might not be an intermediary. The elder taking delivery of the tokens might place them himself or, if afraid he would be suspected of dishonesty, he might give them to another man to do so. Well-omened phrases were used, such as 'The luck of this stone lies there and of this twig here'. In the Malësi e Madhe the elder said which portion the bits of stick each represented, then drew them, as would be done in England. Here the procedure seems influenced by the European
[77] education of the priests.

623 The commonest fee for an elder dividing property between
428 brothers was two or three napoleons, but it might be as low as one or as high as ten. Everything depended on how much the brothers quarrelled over the division, and how hard they struggled against yielding one to the other. In Perlat the elder made a distinction between rich and poor, asking a sheep from a rich family but only a kilo of coffee from a poor one. In Mirditë he had the right to a sheep and a money fee as well; the latter was as agreed. In Lumë 'it does not do to have an elder without a sheep'. Wherever, as in Godolesh, officials arranged the separation, no fees were charged.

408 Everywhere one meal at least of meat and rice pilaff must be
574 given to whoever came from outside the family to separate the brothers. If these had no flocks, they must buy meat from someone who had. The expense of these meals, which was heavy for people so poor, was shared by all the brothers, the animals being taken out of the common stock before it was divided and the money for the rice, coffee and, if necessary, meat out of the common purse before the settling up of accounts. These meals were the first charge on the family property.

All stages of the division were watched by neighbours. Before the persons negotiating the separation sat down to the final meal,

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

592 596 The separation completed, each new household had its own master and mistress, and its members were no longer under the control of the master and mistress of the old home, who now controlled only their own establishment. It was remembered, however, that the master of this smaller home was master of the house in which they had all lived together. When he was succeeded by his son or another, his former position was still kept in mind. So when the brotherhood formed at the first separation expanded into a kin the master of this house became the 'elder of the kin'. If his kin was the most important in the ward, his name was given to the ward and so perpetuated. The names of most wards were the names of such elders.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

CHAPTER XII

ELDERS

It is impossible to understand the laws and customs of the Albanian mountains without a knowledge of the varieties and responsibilities of the elders. A man could be an elder not only in the literal sense but as a legal personage. Seven types developed in sequence one from another among the southern tribes.

Everywhere the word for 'elder' is (sing.) *plak* (plur. *pleq*), which is pure Albanian and means literally 'old man'. There is a corresponding feminine (sing.) *plaka*, 'old woman'. In households of any size there might be several men and women who were really old in years and were 'elders' in the literal sense. These were the first type. The majority were ordinary people and had no legal importance.

The idea of age disappears with the second type, found in every household irrespective of its size. Here there were always one man and one woman who bore the special title of 'old man (or elder) of the house' and 'old woman (or elder) of the house'. These under their more usual Albanian titles of master of the household and mistress of the household were not necessarily elders in the sense of 'older people'. They might have attained their position when under forty and have found themselves in authority at that comparatively early age over older men and women.

The third category of elders appeared as soon as a household split up and each brother or male cousin in it acquired his own house. Then, a 'brotherhood' (*vllazni*) was formed. In this community each new house was as much a separate entity as the parent one, and was no longer under the control of the master and mistress, the 'elders' of the old joint home. It had its own 'elders' of both sexes who managed all its affairs, external and internal. The 'old man' of the joint home, now administering a much smaller household, thus lost a proportionate share of his importance. But the new masters also lost some of theirs. So long as the family lived together any competent adult among them might deputise for the master in village or tribal affairs or in the administration of the communal home, but from the day they separated,

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

us by Father Gjeçov,[1] the last clause announces that though the Pecnikaj kin of Shalë laid down the law enunciated in clause 2, it had the support of the Lotaj, Abati (Abat) and Bobi (Bob) kins in doing so. Its first and its fourth clauses consider the adhesion of the brotherhood of Theth as well. Occasionally there was a partial meeting of a brotherhood, and at the bottom of the scale there were household meetings at which the master set some common problem before all the men in the family.

Generally speaking, assemblies of all types took place at irregular intervals, to meet some special need, though the demand that they should be called regularly once a year was not unknown.[2]

When a kin or smaller meeting was in question, the convener sent anyone he could find to call it. Bigger meetings were summoned by word of mouth by the public messenger. In Mat a gipsy beat out the summons on his drum and in Shpat church bells were rung.

Attendance at a plenary meeting was compulsory, non-attendance punishable by a fine. For instance, an elder of Kurbin who failed to turn up and could not satisfy the other elders that his absence was justified was fined five rams. An ordinary tribesman in the same area was fined one ram and in Kastrat 250 piastres. The strength and solidarity of the tribes were closely connected with the plenary character of their assemblies.

Most public meetings took place in the open air, as church houses were usually too small and schoolrooms and village halls did not exist. Meeting places had to be central and free from cultivation, rock, scrub and forest so as to provide adequate seating space In Catholic areas the yard of the church was commonly used for General Assemblies and in Moslem areas that of the mosque. Assemblies of a village or kin could be held in the most central of the smaller clearings of the area, and a house was big enough for a brotherhood or household assembly.

Some meeting-places were specially famous. At Lesh, a thriving seaport at the mouth of the river Drin, and not the malarial inland townlet into which it has been converted by the advance of the Drin towards Italy, Lek Dukagjini and Skanderbeg met by preference, as it was centrally situated for both their domains. The place of meeting was probably the grassy sward near the ruined church on the right bank of the Drin, opposite the modern town.

[1] See Appendix, Document XII, p. 272

[2] See Appendix, Document V, § 16, p. 264.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

695 be put to the oath; such an ordeal was not for boys under twenty,
old men over sixty, women, gipsies or lunatics. All of these were
[562] considered so irresponsible that even their sworn word carried no
[592] weight. One exception comes from Zerqan, where a woman
accused of a petty theft like stealing a dress might take an oath in
the semi-privacy of her home that she was innocent. If her fault
was more serious, her oath was not accepted. A man—her husband
[672] or son or, failing these, her brother—had to take one for her, as he
would have done for his senile father or his infant son. Another
exception occurred in family oaths, as described later. But this
exception was apparent rather than real. The infant boys who were
present did not themselves take the oath. The master alone
repeated the words dictated; the boys and other males were
present solely to be implicated to the maximum extent possible in
the dread consequences of perjury.

In criminal cases it was the suspect, the man who denied an accusation, who had to take the oath. In such cases its sole purpose was to clear him of suspicion; if he could take it, he was acquitted, and if he could not, he was convicted. The accuser was never allowed to support his accusation by an oath; even if he insisted that with his own eyes he had seen the crime being committed, he could not swear upon oath that what he said was true. For motives of spite might have induced him first to accuse his neighbour falsely, and then to swear a false oath. So the law said firmly 'It's for the denier to take the oath'.

695 Occasionally a suspect refused to take the oath. Then his
628 accuser was at least tempted to shoot him. If it was a case of stealing he had to think twice; shooting the suspect would start a blood feud because 'murder for a fault (like stealing) isn't allowed', and perhaps the lost property was not worth the nuisance which the blood feud would cause. If it was a murder case, it did not much matter if he did shoot the suspect; he was already at feud with the murderer. In property cases refusals to take the oath seem to have been unknown when the dispute was in the hands of elders; if they ordered a disputant to take an oath, he dared not disobey for he knew that the whole community would gather to enforce the order. If one disputant, before the case had reached the elders, asked the other to take an oath that the property was his, his request was refused as often as not, and then shooting became inevitable.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

provisions for carrying on the work. The first was the law that women, children, servants and domestic animals must not be shut up. So in comparative security the able-bodied women, on whom fell the heaviest burden, tilled the fields, went to market, ground corn at the mill and fetched water from the spring and firewood from the forest. The boys and aged women herded the cows, sheep and goats. The servants took part in any or all of these tasks, but few households could afford the luxury of servants.

A social phenomenon alleged to be a by-product of this immunity of women and children is interesting. To-day a good proportion of the agricultural work of Albania is done by women, while the men idle; a generation ago the bulk of it was so done. The men of to-day excuse their idling by saying it is a habit formed when they or their fathers were shut up by blood feuds; whatever their natural inclination to work, they were then driven perforce into allowing their women to toil alone to feed the family. This plea may or may not be valid; as the frequency of blood feuds decreased, the men's industry increased.

In bad feuds the immunity of women and children was sometimes denied. Even to-day the women of Murat Kaloshi's household cannot stir outside his compound except under heavy escort; failing that, they would be shot without pity by his enemies. The numerous children in his household are growing up illiterate four minutes' walk from an excellent school; if they attended this school, a battalion of gendarmes or men-at-arms could hardly ensure their safety. Another bad case is to be found at Milot, where even the boys in the cradle in Gjin Bardhoku's house have to share the men's imprisonment. In Çermenikë the immunity of women was never absolute; there was always a danger that the avenger might lose his temper and kill them. Within living memory two women in Fenars, one of the more accessible villages in Çermenikë, once tried to plough and were discovered by the avenger. On their declining to desist as he bade them, he fired at them with unexpectedly fortunate results. He wounded both but only severely enough to make them fall to the ground while letting go the oxen. They made a speedy recovery and, each wound counting as half a 'blood', the avenger was considered to have taken vengeance. The two parties were then 'measure for measure' and made peace.

Again with a view to feeding the murderer's family an avenger

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1
Historical Albania EG2

H 794 present Kopliku; Albanian districts on the Drin are also given or ordered to pay tribute. All of which confirms Father Brocardus's statements.

H 792 651 Stefan Urosh III, when founding the monastery at Dechani, gives it in 1330 many "villages and katuns of Vlahs and Albanians between the Lim and White Drin," and gives a list of persons who are to pay tribute, the last of which are Zaharia and Mihal of Nikita in Pulati, who are to pay the former 4,000 and the latter 2,000 cocoons annually to the Church. All Vlahs and Albanians are to carry salt for the monastery. Thus numbers of peasants were put into the power of the Orthodox Church, but though severe laws were enacted against Catholicism, North Albania in large part remains Catholic.

H 775 779 So soon as the Serb Empire fell, references to Albanian chiefs become frequent, and the Catholic Church speedily took the ascendancy. Many of these chiefs took service with their men under Venice. Others were subsidized by Venice as allies. All documents show that at the time of the Turkish invasion there was a large Albanian population both in the mountains and on the plains, which then, as now, were largely used as winter pasture.

The swoop of the conquering Turk, the capture of Scutari and Alessio, the complete destruction of Drivasto, caused a great dislocation of population. As the Turk settled on the fat plains, numbers of refugees took to the mountains. The tradition now told in the mountains of the north is often that of these immigrant refugees, who tell of having found other inhabitants in the land, but the families who H 582 now trace direct male descent from these are few. The strict law of exogamy must, however, have forced the immigrant to intermarry largely with the old inhabitant, and the race continuity is, therefore, unbroken.

2. The Maltsia e Madhe Group

A 619 614 The tribes fall into several main groups.

The Maltsia e Madhe (the Great Mountains) group consisted, when I visited it, of five large tribes and some smaller ones.

1. *Gruda.*—A tribe of one bairak, situated between the river Tsem and the old Montenegrin frontier. To the north of it is Triepshi and south is Hoti. Triepshi was part of this group till given to Montenegro in 1878. Gruda in 1908 consisted of about five hundred "houses." A [592] A "house" was roughly reckoned at from eight to ten souls.

Of these five hundred "houses," eighty traced descent from Berisha A [167] (see below), and thus are of old indigenous stock. The remainder, called Djell, said they were immigrants from the Herzegovina, and that

8:Coon E-5 (1929-30;46-48)1956 EG1 Albania EG1
Highland Ghegs

000 TO THE anthropologist, selective marriage systems, such as cross-cousin and parallel-cousin, are run-of-the-mill phenomena. But the anthropologist is used to dealing primarily with non-European peoples, living far from centers of civilization. To the sociologist brought up on European and American subject matter it is an event to discover a "primitive" system in operation only 250 miles from Rome, in the 20th century.

592 As our study of material culture made clear, the Gheg family, like that of the early Israelites, or of the Chinese of any period, is an economic institution. One household, consisting of a man, his wife or wives, his sons, unmarried daughters, and son's children, lives in a single house or group of houses, and all ordinarily work together. The most complicated tasks which confront them require the co-operation of such a group, but no more, except in rare events when neighboring kinsmen may be called in. Isolation and political insecurity enhance the frequency and strength of the mutual relations of the family members. In some of the tribes, notably Dukagin, these households number up to 30 or 40 persons; the Arabic word *mehalla* (military camp) is used to designate them.

[462] A sex division of labor clearly separates the work of the women from that of the men. Each needs the other. A houseful of widows and unmarried women would be unthinkable, as would a house occupied by men alone. The family must be a balanced unit. If a man dies his place must be filled if possible: if a woman fails to bear children another must be found [842] who can. The family must continue, and since so many men are killed before they reach maturity, it must produce boys. The birth of girls is less important because they are not killed, and because they leave the family to get married.

582 For a number of very good reasons, it is considered desirable to obtain wives for one's sons from a distance. In the first place, if a

[127] [1] The principal source of this chapter is my own records. However, I also made use of Miss M. E

Politics and Feuding

592 THE smallest political institution in tribal Gheg society is the household, the extended family living together, which is also an economic institution. The head of the household is the oldest male of the parental or grandparental generation, the patriarch. So strong is the feeling for age-grading in Albania that men will obey their fathers as faithfully at 40 and 50 as in their teens. Since all sons do not necessarily live with their fathers, but some may occupy separate houses, the institution of the household may thus be expanded spatially, although the relationships are maintained.

[672] The household is a unit of warfare; when a man commits murder within his own tribe, his [628] household suffers together. In seeking vengeance, a man can wipe out the blot on his family honor by killing the brother of his enemy; responsibility is held to be collective. If one member of a household kills another, which happens but very rarely,[1] nothing is done. The loss is that of the family.

621 The next unit is the village. It may be a compact group of houses, surrounded by its farmland and pasture; or it may consist of isolated homesteads, each in its own land. The latter is the more usual form. In either case, it has some central building, a mosque or a church; or it may merely have a flat place, usually shaded by an oak, where the elders 623 meet. Each village is supposed to have 12 elders, whose office is partly hereditary, partly elective. Various families habitually furnish one man each to fill this position. The word for elder is *plak*, which Miss Durham traces back to the time of Strabo.[2] One of these elders is the *kryeplak*, literally, head elder. In one village in Has, when I measured the *kryeplak*, he told the recorder that he was "mayor" of the village. He calls the elders together when events arise that need their

[1] Miss Durham gives one instance from Dukagin (Durham, 1928, pp. 69-70).
[2] Durham, 1928, p. 14.

9:Megas I, B-5,4 (no date) 1951 - EH1 Greece
Albania EG1

as the most perfect type originating from a prostyle house. Even the difference in the size of the windows proves that the walls on the side of the veranda were built later than the rest of the building. 342

The description of another house of Bregumatja (p. 46, Fig. 33) illustrates the inner disposition of living space, and shows a similar evolution: the veranda has been closed by a wall on the frontside. Part of the inside, however, has remained as an entrance hall. A room with two windows «a la franca» was made on the right of the hall, and a cellar on its left. Yet these spaces were not separated by solid walls, but by thin mud-covered trellis. The room is characterised by

Fig. 72. View of a house in Kolaj
(Nopcsa, fig. 32)

its roof, its large and glass panelled windows and by its containing a high table with a few high chairs, just as «the good room», destined for distinguished guests. This form and furniture are typical for all these extra rooms. The two large rooms at the back of the house are communicating by a door, but they do not have any ceiling. One of these rooms serves as men's room, and the other as women' s room, but at the same time as a kitchen and cellar for everyday life articles. [352]

This multiple formation, as shown in this advanced type of Albanian house, evidently corresponds to the needs of the Albanian family, which is based on patriarchal customs. Moreover, if we take into consideration the life conditions of Albanias, the house pictured on Fig. 72 could include, according to Nopcsa, 20-30 inhabitants, as the only 342 592

9:Megas 1,B-5,4 (no date) 1951 EH1 Greece
Albania EG1

342 reason for building another house would be the dissolution of family
[592] bonds.
[171] Consequently, the system which exists in the Slav countries, to build separate, additional, small dwellings for young or married members of the family, is foreign to the housing customs of the Albanians.

As Nopcsa remarks (p. 49), a more developed and organically disposed house, like that pictured in Fig. 72, cannot easily be expanded, because of the serious difficulties created by a corridor running along it, as well as for the position of fireplaces and staircase. That these difficulties may be overcome, is shown by the house of Trushi (in Zadrima) Fig. 73.

[354] In this house, fireplaces have been moved to the front long wall and placed between two windows. Two staircases have been built

Fig. 73. Big house in Trushi, in the plain of Scodra
(Nopcsa, fig. 32)

in addition, with two prostoa opening at the centre. A twin house has thus been formed, each of which it is completely separate from the other. By the wooden extensions of both prostoa, some of which
[251] project and are supported dy wooden beams, there are formed some washing places known from our own villages; or cupboards, for victuals, that are protected against mice on the one hand, and are in a cool air draft on the other.

Similar constructions are seen in the veranda of an old two-storey house of Scodra (Fig. 74). This house is more than 125 years old and it is built at right angles, because of the smallness of the building plot. The ground floor includes a weaving room, an oil press, a stable, a wood store, etc.; living rooms are all in the upper floor.

593

593 FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS--patterns of behavior between spouses, between parents and children, between siblings; rights, privileges, and powers of husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, and sister; family law; emotional attachments; evidences of ambivalence; etc. See also:

Kinship terminology and patterned behavior between secondary and remoter relatives . . . 60
Marital sexuality 83
Care, status, activities of children 85
Socialization 86
Personality traits 157
Division of labor by sex 462
Sex status 569
Quarrels 578
Conception of marriage 581
Incest taboos 838
Theory of paternity 842

562 592 [583] 587 a daughter and no son she has the right to remain a hundred days in the house. Then if the heirs order her to leave she must go, but her daughter remains as part of the heir's household, and he has the right to choose her husband and dispose of her. In practice the widow may remain in the house as "levirate wife" of one of her brothers-in-law, and very commonly does so among the Dukagini. In Maltsia e Madhe the practice is obsolete.

589 562 If the widow has had a son who has predeceased his father, she has more consideration. If the house is a small one, she may live in it if capable of carrying on. If a large one, she may live as a member of the heir's household so long as she is unmarried. If she elects to return [593] to her father, the heir, or heirs, must supply her regularly with wool for spinning, bread, cheese, and other necessaries so long as she remains unmarried.

421 A married daughter has no right to anything whatever of her father's property; she no longer belongs to his "house."

TRIBAL BUSINESS

623 Business relating to the whole tribe requires a very large council. In a large tribe the council may be about a hundred. It includes the heads of houses, the heads of mehalas, the bariaktar, and twelve specially chosen elders famed for their intelligence. Such a council, for example, was needed to decide if each tribe would accept the Turkish Constitution in 1908; to decide if a tribe would revolt or aid another that has revolted; what side it would take in war, and so forth. Smaller councils dealt with pasture lands; how many beasts each house might pasture upon the common lands; the date at which pasturing might begin.

421 311 [134] 312 The rights of wood-cutting, too, were thus regulated. Certain groups had rights in certain woods. Unluckily no one ever thought of replanting. Great harm has been done by deciding to burn a forest in the hope of obtaining pasture land; only too often the result being that the winter rain carried away the soil and left bare rock. The water supply is also controlled by council, especially in those districts where an ingenious system of channels carries water great distances and takes it across valleys on rude aqueducts made of hollowed tree-stems.

689 In time of scarcity the number of hours per week in which a man may turn the water into his fields is jealously regulated. Purposely defiling wells and springs was punishable.

671 Not only all the above laws are ascribed to Lek, but many rules intended to keep the peace. For example, that men marching abreast must keep the length of a gun-barrel apart, lest in turning hastily it

587 law was taken to wife more often than not. To remonstrances the reply was, "She belongs to us," and it was pointed out it was the only way to get a wife without paying for her.

[589] In these districts, if the widow is sold, the bride-price is shared by her husband's family and her father's.

595 A man at Nikaj came to see me who was excommunicate for having
577 two wives—a legitimate wife and the widow of his cousin. He told me
688 he could not possibly put her away because it would be a disgrace to do so. She must stay in the house because she had young children to bring up, and so long as she is in the house he must cohabit with her, for she cannot have another husband. He was unhappy about the excommunication—but one must do one's duty and take the risk.

587 It is perhaps noteworthy that in the districts where this custom
144 is firmly rooted there are no Slavonic place-names and no appearance
103 of any Slavonic blood. The people are all in stature shorter and smaller built than the Maltsia e Madhe people. They are almost all dark-eyed—dark-brown to hazel—and dark-haired. The skull is short, but is round at the back and has not the characteristic flat back of the folk farther north. The hair grows very low on the forehead, especially on the temples, where sometimes it almost unites by a thin line of hair with the outer end of the eyebrow. The eyebrows often nearly meet in the middle. The nose is short and straight. The moustache is sparse and straggly. The beard, such as is seen after a fortnight without shaving, often sparse or patchy.

587 The custom of the levirate may therefore belong to the small,
174 dark, pre-Slavonic people.

The purpose of the levirate in other lands is often said to be to raise up children who are to rank as those of the deceased. Though this may have been the reason in the above-mentioned case of the man who took the very recently married widow of his brother, in the great majority of cases in Albania it is not so; for the widow with sons is the one who has the right to remain, and in fact must remain, in the family house; and therefore it is she who is most frequently the levirate wife. In this matter Albanian custom seems to differ from that in other lands where the levirate is practised.

4. Rights of Husband over Wife

562 No one may beat a woman but her father or her husband. In the mountains a husband had the right to beat his wife if he told her three
593 times to do, or not to do, a thing, and she disobeyed each time. If he
681 orders her not to reply and she does so he may beat her. Even some

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

If, however, she returns home and marries into another family, her father pays to her first husband's heirs, or to her son if she have one, half the dowry promised at her second betrothal. With the exception of her deceased husband's brother, a woman may not re-marry in the same village without the consent of his relatives. In the mountains of Pulati this is never given, and a vendetta follows if it is dispensed with. If the betrothed man die, his brother has also the right to marry the betrothed maiden, but must pay to her parents, in addition to the dowry already promised, a hundred and fifty piastres. 587 [628]

An Albanian has the right to beat his wife if she misconducts herself, but this right is little exercised except among the Liaps, who are the rudest and most brutal of all Albanians. He must, however, be careful not to draw blood even in the most trifling degree, for, if a wife receives a mere scratch in the course of a castigation, she complains to her parents, who cite the husband before the authorities. The penalty consists chiefly in the payment of a considerable fine, which becomes the private property of the woman abused. 593 [681]

Divorce is not uncommon among the Moslem Albanians, who follow in this respect the customs of the Ottomans, the husband paying to the discarded wife the sum specified in the marriage contract in view of such a contingency. The divorce generally takes place at the instance of the husband, but the wife may also claim it for a limited number of reasons. If, for instance, a man has left his native town or village, and does not return within the period fixed by the 586 [171]

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

586 Kadi, his wife may claim to be released from her vows to him. Other sufficient causes for divorce are ill-treatment, aberration of mind, and excessive corpulence on the part of the husband.

562 462 The Moslem Albanian, when he marries, is, like the Osmanli, bound to provide his wife with food, clothes, and shelter in keeping with his position and means, and cannot require her, as do the Christians, to earn money for herself or for him by her labour. She, on her side, is required to obey her husband and never oppose his wishes, to abstain from anything likely to annoy or vex him, and to watch over the interests of the family, and, if poor, she must do the work of the house, cook the food, do the dairy work, spin the [283] wool and flax necessary for the family use. The Albanian generally has no fondness for field labour, which he usually leaves to the women, children, and old men, and, when he does not follow the calling of a soldier or trader, prefers wood-cutting, attending to his vineyard, or, still more, tending sheep on the mountains, a pursuit which combines laziness with peril.

463 Besides those who enter the military service, numbers seek fortune in the large towns of Turkey, as traders, *cavasses*—a kind of orderly attached to Embassies, Consulates, banks, and other public offices, in which capacity they are much esteemed for their devotion to their employers—or in other positions of trust. As soon as they have amassed sufficient money to enable them to do so, they return home and marry, in order to prove themselves respectable members of [593 591] society. After a brief sojourn in the bosom of their families they return to their employment, leaving

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

their young wives in charge of their parents. For with the Skipetars, as with the majority of Oriental peoples, patriarchal customs still survive, and all the sons bring home their brides to the paternal roof, there to remain in subjection to the parents-in-law until they shall themselves be heads of families.

The highest aspiration of an Albanian wife is to be the mother of boys, and she is less proud of her own beauty and the rank of her family than of the number of her sons and of their valour. The mother of many sons is sure of the lasting affection of her husband, enjoys the respect and consideration of the rest of his family, and wields great authority in the household to which she has come as a stranger. As they never permanently leave the paternal roof, she may look forward to their support and affection in her old age, and to see their children growing up around her. When her husband leaves his home for a sojourn at a distance, custom requires that she should manifest no grief at his departure. Instead of accompanying him to the threshold, and watching his familiar figure disappear in the distance, or going to meet him on his arrival, she hides herself at both the moment of his arrival and of his departure. A woman's tears or joy, they say, must not soften a man's heart when his duty lies before him. Neither must they ask for news of them at any time during their absence. Yet in the depth of their hearts no wives more regret the absence of their husbands, as the touching little superstitious observances with which they console themselves testify. Unknown to their partners, they sew in their clothes

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

484 562 777 789 small objects, which they themselves have worn, as talismans to ensure their safe return, and during their often protracted absences they resort to various 787 methods of divination, either with or without the aid of a professional wise woman, in order to discover how their beloved spouses fare, where they sojourn, and how they are occupied.

152 593 The men on their side are not free from home-sickness, and many are the pathetic little exile-songs, in which their longings for their native mountains, and for the beloved ones from whom they are, for a time, separated, find expression. One may serve as a specimen:

[539]

Now in Bender, now in Buda,
Bide we lone and desolate.
Patience, heart! What boots complaining,
So it hath been willed by Fate.

Yet this grievous bitter exile
Cannot longer still be borne;
Is't naught that we like felons wander
From Fatherland as outlaws forn?

Who the exile's griefs can number?
Say whose woes can equal mine?
E'en the viper, should she sting me,
Poisoned by my blood would pine!

527 535 The amusements of the Albanian women are, for the most part, limited to birth and wedding festivities, at which singing and dancing are the principal features. Albanian dances are of two kinds: the Pyrrhic, as it is called by travellers, which is usually indulged in by the men, and a kind of "kerchief dance," which is affected by the women, the two sexes always performing separately. The women dance in couples,

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

hear him. He offers her sweets which have been left there purposely, but still she heeds him not. This comedy may, if the bridegroom be timid and the bride reserved, be prolonged until the third evening after the marriage, in which case the courage and virtue of the bride are extolled by the women in song. On the third evening, however, custom requires the bride to respond to her husband's advances. On the three days following the wedding the bride, dressed as before, stands like a statue in the reception-room to receive the women visitors who flock to the house in order to inspect her.

The ceremonies attending the nuptials of the mountain people are almost precisely similar to those customary in the towns, with the exception that the bride is not veiled when conducted to her husband's home. A romantic reserve, however, surrounds the interviews between the young couple, who, especially if the husband be one of a numerous family and have no private apartments, can only meet in secret until they have children of their own. The mountaineers cherish this custom, which, they contend, by surrounding with a halo of romance and mystery the relations of the young couple, tends to keep their love for each other fresh and warm. The wedding processions of the Moslems and Christians are only to be distinguished by the more picturesque effect of those of the former. Many of the company, dressed in rich apparel glittering with gold embroidery, accompany the bride on horseback, indulging as they go, whenever they arrive at a spot sufficiently spacious, in the manly old Osmanli game of throwing the *djerid*, or spear. Pistols

PEAKS OF SHALA

000 583 God. It was not strange that what I had heard of the marriage customs had baffled me, he said; I should not look for traces of marriage by capture or marriage by purchase; the basis of the tribal ceremonies is fire worship.

585 593 On the day of the wedding the bride, elaborately dressed, is carried, screaming and struggling, from her father's house, and by her brothers is delivered to the husband's family at a place midway between the lands of the two [582] tribes. Since each tribe is technically a large [619] family, claiming a common prehistoric ancestor, it is forbidden to marry within the tribe. The bride carries with her from her home one invariable gift—a pair of fire tongs. When she arrives at her husband's house she takes a humble place in the corner, standing, her hands folded on her breast, her eyes downcast, and for three days and nights she is required to remain in that position, without lifting her eyes, without moving, and without eating or drinking.

"Though I believe," said the bishop, smiling, "that she takes the precaution of hiding some food and drink in her garments, and no doubt the mother-in-law sees that she is allowed to rest a little while the household is asleep." And he explained that this custom remains from the old days when the father of each house was also the priestly guardian of the fire, and anyone coming to ask for a light from it stood reverently in that position, silent, before the hearth, until the father priest gave it to him. The bride, new-

1 [Bishop of Pultit -- Analyst]

PEAKS OF SHALA

comer in the family, is a suppliant for the gift of 585
fire, of life, of the Mystery that continues the race. 593

On the third day she puts on the heavy belt that means she is a wife, and thereafter she goes about the household, obeying the commands of the elders, always standing until they tell her to sit, and for six months not speaking unless they address her. And it is her duty to care for the fire, and with her fire tongs to light the cigarettes smoked by any of the family, or by their guests. Sometime, when it is convenient, she and her husband will go to the church and be married by the priest. Usually she has not seen 584
her husband until she comes to his house, since she is of another tribe and the marriage is arranged by the families.

"We have tried to prevent the betrothing of children before they are born," said the bishop, smiling ruefully, "and in many centuries we have had some effect. Children now are usually not betrothed until they are two or three years old. Even that we combat, of course, yet I cannot say that the custom makes much unhappiness. Husbands and wives are good comrades; they almost never quarrel and they are devoted to their children. But you will see all that for yourself. Yet occasionally there is something ooo
like this Shala-Shoshi affair, which I fear will lead to much bloodshed. But the dinner is ready and my servant will show you your room and bring water to wash your hands."

The servant led us to the bishop's own bed-

Bishop of Pultit -- Analyst

devise another way of getting at the subject. For I did want to know what Albanian women felt about being married to men they had never seen, in strange tribes, and I knew they would never tell me through masculine interpreters. Lulash would know.

"But most of the sources of happiness that you mentioned are in the lives of men," I said. "Are the women happy?"

"No," said Lulash. "I do not think our women are happy." He seemed deeply troubled; there were perplexity and anxiety in his dark eyes, and he moved restlessly—which Albanians almost never do—as he sat on the floor by the heap of coals in the baking dish. They had sunk quite into gray ashes; the bleak room was very cold, filled with the ceaseless swishing sound of the rain and of the innumerable waterfalls that poured from the mountains overhead.

"Perhaps I shouldn't be asking him this? Perhaps he is married to an unhappy woman?" I asked.

"No," said Perolli. "He is not married; he is the only man in Shala who is not married."

"Our women have their children; they love their children," said Lulash. "And they do not quarrel with their husbands. It almost never happens that there are ugly words in a family. But I do not think the women are happy. I do not know whether they would be happier if they chose their own husbands. Girls of the marrying age are not very wise. But I often think,

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

CHAPTER IV

THE ALBANIAN HOUSEHOLD

Society in the Albanian mountains was patrilineal, and took so little account of women that whereas the names of ancestors in the male line might be known for as many as twenty generations, those in the female line were forgotten after two or three. In the words of the Unwritten Law 'a man has blood, and a woman kin', i.e. a man has a pedigree, and a woman her own relatives, and 'a woman is anybody's daughter', i.e. comes from anywhere and has no pedigree.

As usual in patrilineal societies, all property and rights were vested in the men. So when a man married, his house belonged to him exclusively and not at all to his wife, neither priest nor law having bound him to endow her with his worldly goods. The Unwritten Law states further that 'a wife is a sack for carrying' things, i.e. she was in her husband's house to bear his children. It was also understood, however, that she must take an active part in the work of both the farm and the house. In consequence, the wife in a household containing only a married pair and their small children led a life of almost unrelieved hardship, all the relaxations and leisure going to the husband. Since the Unwritten Law forbade her to have any dealings with the outside world until she was old, she stayed at home to work while her husband went to market to shop and sell, visited government offices to discuss the payment—or non-payment—of his taxes, and arranged the future marriages of his children. Whether it was a kerchief, a daughter-in-law, or nothing at all that he bought for her, he never consulted her wishes and she might not murmur openly at his choice. Nor might she remonstrate with him if he idled when at home; any such criticism would only make him beat her. The Unwritten Law said that the husband was the head of the wife and might punish her for indiscipline as well as misconduct. There was plenty of secret grumbling of course. Thus a pretty young woman in Mat was heard to complain that her husband spent all the money he could find on coffee and cigarettes for himself and left her, after five years of marriage, 'without a rag to her back'. 'And it's for him I toil

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGI Albania EGl

and moil the whole blessed day', she ended, sadly rather than bitterly.

Toil and moil she did. The daily duties of every peasant woman in her position included fetching firewood from the forest and water from the river or spring, besides cooking, washing and baking for the household. At certain seasons she must also do farm work, so long as she retained a measure of youth. Her husband did heavy work like ploughing, scything hay, or cutting oak leaves for winter fodder. But she must carry the manure from the stable to the fields in spring, help her husband to sow and earth up the maize and, while he stayed indoors, reap it. She must carry home the hay and fodder and feed them to the animals. If grain was trodden out by horses or oxen, her husband drove them; if threshed with flails, she wielded them. If there was no miller, she conveyed the grist to the mill, ground it, and brought back the flour. Only if there were a miller did these tasks devolve on her husband, and then it was only in order to keep her virtue above suspicion. In poor families she was herself the beast of burden, and when young was expected to carry up to seventy pounds. In richer families she had a horse or donkey to do the actual carrying, unless her home was under snow in winter. Then she must brave the snow that confined the animal to its stable and bring in supplies of firewood and water, fodder and flour. Paucity of workers prevented her husband from having more than a couple of milch-goats or ewes, and these were tethered; it was she who tethered, watered and milked them. It was she, too, who turned their milk into curds (*kos*) or butter and cheese, arduous tasks in summer when milk sours easily. She also saw to the poultry and in her spare time knitted or span.

Fortunately for the women, there was almost no peasant household in which a young husband and wife were the only workers. The eldest child, boy or girl, began at seven or eight years of age to herd the goats as they roamed in search of food and saw to them morning and evening. This gave the mother some relief and provided the family with more food and, by the sale of the goats themselves or the kids, more money. When very small, the girl must spin or knit as she herded; when in her teens, she must sew her trousseau; but no extra tasks were expected of boy herds. Since, too, a man's mother and sisters never lost their legal right to share his home, a family might include the husband's mother and even

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

his unmarried sister or his widowed, childless sister. In that event, while the younger women worked outside, his mother, if physically fit, remained at home to cook, sweep and bake, besides attending to the dairy and poultry. She also saw that any children who were big enough to walk but too small to follow their mother to the fields, did not fall into the fire or otherwise come to grief. She further entertained any men visitors who might come when her son was absent. She did not, however, wash her clothes or her husband's, should he be still alive, for even at the height of the busy season outside that was one of her daughter-in-law's duties. When she was no longer strong enough for her various tasks, she was sent out, complete with distaff, to herd the goats or plough-oxen and another woman succeeded her as housekeeper.

If the married pair had a separate bedroom, it was private property, as inviolable as a separate house would be, and no one other than the man and his wife and children might enter uninvited. Unless she was his wife, even the housekeeper was under the ban. It followed that when a wife worked outside, she must care herself for her bedroom, sweeping it, spreading the bedding at night, and picking this up again in the morning. She must also tend her children, and wash and mend their clothes, her husband's and her own, besides those of her mother-in-law. If she had a tiny baby, she carried it in its cradle on her back to the fields, left it in a shady place while she worked, and carried it home again in the evening.

If the house was too small to have a sitting-room, the husband ate in the kitchen. He never lingered over the meal, and in most districts ate alone unless his mother, privileged by having brought him into the world, wished to join him. A man who ate with his wife or sat much in her company courted public ridicule as unmanly and 'no class'. If there was a sitting-room, the husband probably took his midday meal in the kitchen and his evening meal in the sitting-room. Before supper he might invite his sons or even his daughters, if these were small, to share the comfort of the sitting-room for a little.

Peasant households with only one man in them were rare, since for economic reasons it was customary for several brothers or even several first cousins to live together until their children were of an age to marry. Then sheer pressure of population compelled the household to split up into smaller units, each with a house of its own.[1]

[1] See Chapter VI.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

to its own safety disappeared, and with it the need for several generations to huddle together under one roof if they wished to survive. Consequently, immense households like that of Gjon Macaj disappeared.

In the families of the landed gentry of Dibër such as Cen Elezi, life followed rather different lines. Most of the young men went into government or army service and left their wives and children at home, visiting them when they obtained leave, and the farm work was done by hired servants with the help and under the supervision of any of the family who might have remained at home. The women were organized on the customary pattern, with some variation in detail. A housekeeper cooked, but only for the women and children, since a special chef was required to cope with the hospitable requirements of the *selamlik*.[1] Each young wife attended to her own room and children besides cleaning her husband's boots and helping him to dress when he was at home. No one was required to work outside, but each must in turn wash up after meals for a week at a time. The daughters of such families were often less fortunate in their lives than the daughters-in-law. For want of suitors of their father's standing they must often be given to men of lower rank and then they worked both in and out of doors as if born and bred in a poor family.

Every house containing two or more married men included a corresponding number of family units. Each of these looked on its own members as we should do—as father, mother, son, daughter, brother and sister—but in its attitude to the other units diverged from our practice. To us the oldest men may be brothers or cousins; to Albanians they were all 'brothers', irrespective of whether one father had begotten them or not. In the next generation instead of first cousins and in the third, second cousins, Albanians saw only 'brothers' and 'sisters' in both. The middle generation of Albanians regarded all its elders as 'uncle' or 'aunt' (though in some, particularly in Moslem, cases distinguishing between the paternal and maternal lines) and all its juniors as 'nephew' or 'niece'. It was only when some need to particularize arose that they defined the relationship according to the blood tie as 'father's brother', 'father's brother's wife', 'brother's son', 'cousin' or the like.

Not only did a man who was seen much in his wife's company lose face, but in a communal household his brothers, in addition to

[1] See p. 21.

1 [i.e., the men's apartment]

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

railing at him, threatened to make him set up a separate home, which would reduce both him and her to a lower level of comfort. Custom, it is true, under the stress of hard necessity, sanctioned his working alongside her in the fields, but only on condition that he did not indulge in unnecessary or frivolous conversation with her. The only explanation which Albanians offered of these restrictions was that a husband and a wife felt 'ashamed' in each other's presence. The same feeling existed all over the Balkans until they came under strong western influences a generation ago. Before that every decorous peasant bride, whatever her race or religion, refrained for several years after her marriage from speaking at all to her husband in public and spoke to him in whispers only in private, meanwhile keeping her eyes modestly downcast. This behaviour seems to originate in an idea, which is prevalent throughout the Near East. The Greeks say that since only the celibate life is really holy, the matrimonial state is one of sin and therefore of shame. In I Cor. vii, 8, St Paul voiced it wher. he wrote, 'I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I'. Moslems, too, believe this, in spite of many being polygamists. There is, for instance, a married as well as a celibate branch of the Bektashi Order of dervishes, but it has so few supporters that at the central monastery at Haci Bektas in the heart of Asia Minor its headquarters are little more than a poverty-stricken excrescence on the enormous, wealthy headquarters of the celibates, and in Albania it has only the monastery at Qesarakë in the south-east, compared with the seventy maintained for the celibates in different parts of the country.

Now the Unwritten Law of Albania ordained that every married woman had the right to visit her own relatives at least once a year. Since these frequently lived in a different village, she could not travel to or from them without an escort, which neither custom nor the law allowed her husband to provide in person. Since brothers were everywhere allowed to talk to each other's wives, no difficulty arose in a communal household, where any man except the husband could accompany a wife to her parents' home and fetch her back. In a house with only one man matters were more complicated. If his mother were alive and physically fit for the journey, she might go with his wife, but who would then cook his supper and prepare his bed for the night? If his mother were dead

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

The master designate, who might be appointed 'bazaar-man' in the master's lifetime, sat in a place of some honour, and might be given coffee and cigarettes while other men went without. Often, too, he was deputed to make the coffee and to lead the conversation with a guest. This was training for him and practice in family manners for his future subordinates. When the master was not present, all the duties and privileges of headship were his. During wedding celebrations no one might join a ring dance, however much he wished to do so, unless commanded by the master or in his absence by the master designate.

There is little to add to what has already been said about the subordinate men in a communal household. Each was head of his own particular family, with full powers to chastise both wife and children, though not to direct their lives and work—that was the master's business. An older man was further regarded as a father by his juniors. This principle was carried so far in Mirditë, though not elsewhere, that he might lawfully reprimand and even beat a junior's wife and children. The junior could not retaliate in kind, for the law holds it criminal to strike a 'father's' wife. In other respects it was a subordinate's whole duty to obey the master.

As for the women in a communal household, the master governed them through the housekeeper: under her official style of mistress of the house she transmitted his orders to the other women or gave them her own and supervised their indoor work. When they were working outside, the master or a man deputizing for him must oversee them, for a mistress worked only in the house and farmyard. She was appointed by the master and was not necessarily his wife. Like him, she must rule justly, moderately, and impartially, taking special pains to avoid favouring her own children, and if his wife did not possess these qualities, he passed her over and chose another. In no case did a mistress have as much authority as the master; she had none at all outside her own departments, and in these must at all times work under his orders. Nor might she buy, sell or barter so much as an egg on her own responsibility. Her tenure of office was also much shorter. Since strong young women must do farm work, she was seldom appointed until nearing forty, and since her duties were manifold and heavy, especially in summer owing to the absence of the other women, she was superseded about fifty when her physical strength began to wane. Her only privilege, but one for which she was much envied by the other women, was

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592 to work indoors. Her clothes were no better than theirs; indeed, if she had dairy work to do, they were usually dirtier. If she was unjust and ill-tempered, pilfered or sold family property, or fomented rather than composed the quarrels that were endemic among the other women, the men assembled in general meeting and deposed her.[1]

562 593 It only remains to describe a small domain with which the master had nothing to do. In astonishing contrast to the penniless men, all the women had their own money and controlled it absolutely. Called *pekul*, from Lat. *peculium*, and essentially pin-money, they spent it on kerchiefs, gewgaws, and even clothes and shoes. Each received the first of it on the morning after her marriage, when her men relatives filed past her in farewell and dropped money into a plate for her. Afterwards her father or brother might slip a coin or two into her hand when he visited her. In the tribal districts of the north her father also gave her on her marriage as much as half of the money which her husband had paid him for her. Later on she might occasionally earn a few pence by knitting socks in her odd moments or making the rough home-spun trousers worn by peasants. Debarred by law and custom from taking the finished articles to market herself, she gave them to her father or brother to sell, but never to her husband or grown-up son, for they would not let her even see the money. If near a market-town, she might gather walnuts or hazel-nuts in the woods and send these to market. In tobacco-growing areas she normally got the coarse bottom leaves of the plants, to smoke or to sell as she pleased. If she had none of these resources, she could only steal maize, eggs, wool or cheese from her husband's house and send a child to the shop to barter them for what she wished to have; she was bound to pay in kind or money, for the law forbade her to pledge either her husband's or her father's credit. On these occasions neither her father nor her brother would act as her agent, for if such connivance in her pilfering were discovered, they would be in serious trouble with her husband's family. If she chose to keep her *pekul* idle, she might safely lock it up in her dowry-chest in her room; her husband never seemed to make her give it up and no others might enter their room. Generally, however, she made the money fructify. In southern areas like Çermenikë she lent it at the usual rate of interest, which was 30% (enough to compensate

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[1] The author never heard, however, of this being done.

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lenders for the want of security), and in the less-developed north she invested it in sheep, plough-oxen, or even horses which she hired out on the 'half-and-half' system. Before a woman died, she gave a little of her *pekul* to her daughters and the major part to her sons, but nothing to her husband, so making a last comment on the curiously detached relationship between them during their married life.

Except in the towns, no Albanian woman ever went into domestic service. Each worked as a girl in her father's house and then in her husband's and, though never paid any money, was assured for life of whatever board, lodging and clothes these could provide. This applied even to families of the standing of Cen Elezi in Dibër. Consequently the Unwritten Law took no cognizance of female servants. On the other hand, men servants—mainly farm workers or herdsmen—were numerous enough to have been carefully legislated for.

Though such a servant ate out of the same dish as his master and slept in the sitting-room or elsewhere in the same conditions as the young unmarried men of the family, he had always to take a back seat—in the literal sense near the door and far from the fire; and, in the metaphorical sense, effacing himself. This befitted both his youth and his status. For his status was like that of a woman. 'It is for the master to command and for the servant to obey', said the Unwritten Law. If he were a shepherd, his views on the beasts under his care commanded his master's respect, but other servants were required to keep their opinions to themselves. In areas such as Martanesh where women could not be killed in a blood feud, a servant was as safe as they were from his master's enemies. 'Kill a servant? Faugh! As well kill a woman', was the sentiment.

There was, however, another aspect to his position: since he came from another family in his master's village or from another village altogether, he was not a member of his master's household but was its guest. As such he was entitled to protection by his master against all hurt from third parties. If he were hit, the offender must pay twice, compensating him for the personal injury of the blow and his master for the affront to his guest. If he were robbed, his master latterly complained to the police, but in the old days would have shot the robber out of hand in the north, but in Martanesh and farther south, not until he saw that the servant himself was too weak to resent the injury as honour demanded. If

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him, possession of the title-deeds made it more certain that they would fulfil the contract. On his death the deeds passed to his sons. 428 737

These were the general rules for his maintenance, but there were a few variants. In Çermenikë a man who had managed to buy a large amount of land during his working years had the right to keep this back when his sons separated and to leave it all to the son with whom he lived, to the exclusion of the others. More often than not, he allowed it to be divided up with the land he inherited. Sometimes he was still able to earn a little. In Lumë his sons treated his earnings as family property, taking the cost of his funeral out of them and dividing up the rest. In Çermenikë the son he lived with paid the whole cost of his funeral and kept all his earnings. In Mat, a relatively fertile district, a yoke of land was set aside for him. On his death his richest son paid for his funeral and took his piece of land in exchange. In Perlat an ox was set aside on Separation day for the public meal at his funeral; it was kept and worked till required by the son with whom he lived; its work was supposed to compensate this son for the other expenses of the funeral. In all areas the father's portion of land was often given by richer families to the poor or, among the Catholics, to the church.

A father had in the last resort the right to banish a son from his house, or a son might insist on hiving off against his father's wish. In either case he need not give him a portion, but when he died the son would take his proportionate share of the food and property, exactly as if he had never been expelled. A son who separated from his father in these conditions must restrict himself to any land his father might have given him and must refrain from interfering with the rest of the land or other property. The consequences of a premature division of property may be seen in the following story from Perlat. Two men made such scenes about their father's remarriage that he bade them leave his house. Of a just, or simple, disposition, he divided his property into three, keeping one-third for himself and giving one apiece to his sons. Afterwards he had two more sons by his second wife, then found he could not leave them more than his own portion of property, for land once divided cannot be taken back, says the law. So each of the two sons he loved best received only one-sixth, and each of the two sons he had come to dislike one-third, of his original property. An interesting variation of the above law is found in Kurbin. If a father gave a rebellious son a portion, he gave it only out of the land and

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livestock which he had bought since the son's birth; it was half or a third or a quarter according to the number of his sons. He kept the rest of his property, and this passed on his death to the son or sons with whom he continued to live, the expelled son getting nothing. If, however, he had built his house since this son's birth, it fell on his death to the son he lived with, but this son must pay the expelled son the usual proportionate share of its value.

When there was an old mother she, like the father, usually went to live with the son she loved best; in 99 cases out of 100 this was the youngest. The problem of her support was not so difficult as that of an old father. The relationship between the sons and their mother was so close that few quarrelled with her and refused her food and shelter. If 'wicked' enough to do so, the whole of their world cried shame and the old lady herself might react. A native of Shelcan in Shpat took his wife away and settled in Elbasan, leaving his mother in the village. She wished openly that he were dead. More important still, a mother had economic value and was seldom the useless encumbrance that most old fathers were. At her weakest she had strength enough to rock the cradle and to mind the house while her son's wife was out working in the fields. Besides, she had worked hard for the general benefit in her time, and that must not be forgotten. For all these reasons, in most places the son she lived with was content to feed and dress her. The others might or might not contribute. If they did, their contribution was generally voluntary and at their discretion. It normally took the form of small presents, such as a kerchief or a pair of sandals. It was not advisable to give such presents regularly, for that might make the son she lived with take them for granted. By exception, in Malësi e Madhe the law bade the other sons combine to send her three loads of maize every year as a contribution towards her keep. In Mat, if she stayed with one son, he must support her unaided; the others gave her no food or clothes. In this district, however, she might opt for staying a month with each son in turn, so making them share the expense of keeping her. In Gjadolesh, and in Shijan near Elbasan, she had the right, like the father, to take one-eighth of the general property. The son worked this land, fed her with its produce and eventually took it into his own holding in consideration of paying for her funeral. In practice she seldom exercised this right, preferring to run in and out of all her sons' houses in turn and getting a meal in any of them. She

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beaten by her husband, and no matter how severe the punishment, her brother, who was her natural protector, would be too ashamed of her conduct to interfere. If a thieving woman did not mend her ways, her husband usually divorced her. The southern Catholics, anxious to reform erring wives and to avoid divorce, sometimes sent wrongdoers to spend a night in the lonely church of Shen Ndue in the forest above the village of Laç in Kurbin. This treatment is said to have been effective in many cases!

By the laws of hospitality, a man never robbed his guest nor a guest his host. If a third party robbed either, the other did his best to find the thief and the stolen goods. But such laws were not always respected, and penalties were prescribed for their breach. In Mirditë a guest who stole was ostracized as well as having to pay the usual penalty. In Kurbin he was expelled for ever from the tribe. If a guest in Mirditë was robbed by a fellow-guest, their host demanded double redress from the criminal—for the injury to his guest and for housebreaking. If a guest was robbed after leaving his host's house, it was still the host's duty to punish the thief, as the latter would know where the victim had been.

[1] [i.e. the Albanian wife, as recorded during the reign of King Zog --Analyst]

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loss of face. At Krujë in 1930 when the authorities sought to punish a man who had murdered his brother during a quarrel, the widow swore that the pistol had gone off accidentally when her brother-in-law was trying to wrest it from her husband, who had threatened suicide. Having thus prevented the authorities from taking action, the widow made no effort to keep the true story of the murder quiet, but repeated it every day during the month when the women met for the ceremonial 'keening'. She was also openly commended by the public for preventing the government from shaming her husband's family by arresting the murderer.

Exceptionally, if the murderer's motive was bad by tribal standards, his relative was well avenged. For instance, if a man killed his cousin or nephew to get his land, the crime was considered so anti-social that the murderer was killed by the community, his blood was lost, and his family expelled. Again, exceptionally, a motive might be so good by tribal standards as to win the murderer public admiration. Thus children in Shalë were taught with great pride that once a tribesman killed his brother for killing a guest, for an Albanian's duty to his guest transcends the claims of blood relationship.

Two modifications of the general rule are to be noted. In Mirditë in spite of the victim's blood being lost, the murderer had to pay the tribe the fine due in cases of ordinary murder, 100 rams and an ox. In the Malësi e Madhe if the two brothers had separated the fratricide had to pay blood money to his brother's dependants. If the widow had no children, she took all the money; if she had a daughter only, she again took it all, for when the time came for the girl to marry, she would as 'head of the family' have to pay the wedding expenses; if she had a son, he took all the money, for his father's death had made him head of the family. The blood money was therefore alimony payable to the widow and orphans who had been robbed of their breadwinner. If the two brothers had not separated, the fratricide as a matter of course supported the widow and orphans along with the other members of his household and the question of alimony did not arise.

Parricide was thought the most abhorrent of all murders within the family. In a sense a father had the right to kill his son without being asked by anybody what he had done, but a son unnatural enough to kill his father could surely not have been got by that father, but must be a bastard. Even where his crime was regarded

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682 627 593 as suicide so that he escaped with his life, and that was the commonest result, he was treated as 'a low-class fellow', visited by none but bad characters, and, if a Mohammedan, never given the greeting 'Peace be with thee'. In Mirditë, always more rigorous than other districts, he was considered so anti-social that he was either killed or expelled in perpetuity by his kinsmen, or, according to another version, by the whole village along with his kinsmen.

606 628 The murder of certain relatives did not concern the family. Thus, if a man murdered a relative by marriage, such as his son-in-law, father-in-law, wife's brother, or sister's husband, the crime ranked as an ordinary murder and was expiated with a life or with blood money. The marriage tie was disregarded; the important point was that, unlike two brothers living under separate roofs, murderer and [581] victim belonged to different families. Such murders were very rare, for marriage relationships were always contracted to secure a valued friend, and no Albanian in his senses ever threw a friend lightly away. Again, if a man murdered his maternal uncle or his sister's son, murderer and victim belonged to different families, and blood money at least was payable for the crime. The contingency rarely arose, since a maternal uncle was regarded as a father and a sister's son as one's own child.

628 ?57 684 593 If a woman was taken in adultery, and her husband killed her and her paramour together—'kerchief and cap together'—he incurred no feud; their deaths went unavenged; it was a case of 'blood for blood', one equal to the other. To prove them guilty he sent for his wife's brother and her lover's brother to see them both lying dead; his message would run, 'I killed her because I caught her sinning'. The wife's brother would hand him a cartridge, saying, 'Here is a cartridge for my sister. Bravo for doing this'. The paramour's nearest relatives came to the house, drank coffee, and took away the corpse; the murderer accompanied them to their house, drank coffee, and so peace was established between them. If the paramour's brother was 'a gentleman', 'a man', he would give a cartridge to the husband, saying, 'I pardon your crime because my brother has sinned'. Even the father of the paramour might say to the murderer, 'A blessing on your rifle', and give him coffee as a sign that there was peace between them. In modern times the government accepted the evidence of the two bodies lying together and punished the husband with no more than two or three weeks' imprisonment.

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This custom of the wife's brother giving a cartridge to a husband who had murdered his erring wife explains the phrase often heard in Albania, 'a bride with a cartridge on her back'. In Martanesh it was an old, but long disused, custom to tie a cartridge on the back of a bride's veil as she left her father's house; this cartridge she was to give to her husband on her wedding night, and he would keep it against the day when he found her unfaithful and then kill her with it. This custom, if it existed elsewhere, has been forgotten, but the phrase is universally known.

In Lumë, if a husband suspected his wife of illicit love-making, he could not tell her people because he was being disgraced. He could only lie in wait till he caught the pair together and then kill them. Sometimes when he could not catch them together, he divorced her; in one instance a man did so on the insistence of his kinsmen, who thought themselves as well as the husband disgraced by the wife's notoriously loose living. He admitted that he could not manage her, divorced her for the sake of the family honour, and then, being too poor to pay the bride-price of another wife, lived alone. Divorcing the wife also ensured that the husband ran no risk of having a feud with either her brother or her lover's family. The Highlanders held similar views—the husband could not question his wife or tell her lover not to come to the house; he could again do nothing but lie in wait until he caught them. A few Highlanders held that the husband might inform her people of her misconduct; if they believed him, they would say, 'Kill her', or perhaps kill her themselves; in either case her death went unavenged. They preferred to kill such a wife for they were Catholics in the main, and as such could not remarry if they divorced their wife. As it was permissible in Martanesh to kill the guilty pair separately, an adulterous wife was never divorced but always killed. If a woman was divorced in Mat, her brother always asked what wrong she had done; if she had been an adulteress, he killed her, provided that the husband first killed the lover. In north-east Albania, if the lover was the husband's brother, divorce was thought the easiest way out. Only an exceptionally brutal man would kill his brother; the average man would prefer to say to his wife, 'You have committed this sin, and are divorced'.

If the husband killed only his wife, her brother avenged her death in most cases; without seeing his sister dead by her lover's side he was unwilling to believe in her guilt and apt to think the husband

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had killed her out of ill-will. After her brother had killed a male from his house, the husband would kill both her brother and her lover; then peace would be made between all three families. In Martanesh and Lumë if the husband did not kill the lover as well, the wife's brother, when threatening vengeance, would say, 'You killed the bitch; why didn't you kill the dog also?'

Sometimes a husband had not the courage or the heart to kill his wife; then perhaps his people killed her. Or perhaps he sent word to her father that he had found her sinning and asked him to kill her. But the father generally replied to such husbands, 'Kill her yourself, because I gave her to you to look after'. If the wife suspected this interchange of messages, she might run away to her father. In that case her husband sent him word saying, 'Either kill that bitch or see me destroy you root and branch'. The father then either killed her or sent her to her husband to kill. If the father protected the wife, a blood feud began between him and the husband, for the latter could not bear the world to think that he had swallowed such a disgrace.

In Martanesh, it should be noted, it was permissible, as it was not elsewhere, to kill the lover and the wife separately, if they could not be found together. This seems to have been the case in Dibër also. About 1916 a man in Vleshjë (Dibër) found his wife unfaithful and killed the lover. The wife ran away, but the husband caught her, poured paraffin on her, and burned her alive, yet seems to have escaped her brother's vengeance.

If the outraged husband killed only the lover, then he had to fear vengeance from the lover's family. In Lumë on the principle that 'vengeance is not abandoned because of guilt', vengeance was sometimes taken by a 'bad' brother for a man killed in adultery. He might kill the husband, forgive him, or demand blood money.

A gruesome story of collective punishment of a guilty pair comes from Martanesh. About 1912 a young man was caught with a young wife. The 'circle' of the young man took him and the 'circle' of the wife took her out to an appointed spot where they stood them up together. The youth's uncle shot him dead, and the girl's brother shot her, while the drums beat and the other men danced. The honour of the two families being thus cleared, they buried the two close together, but in separate graves, at cross-roads; no hoxha was present to commit them to the grave, nor were they washed and changed. In the neighbouring Zdrâjshë also a guilty

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couple were buried in any sort of hole, but in separate graves without a hoxha or being washed on boards and changed. In Lumë other customs prevailed. Both were buried in the cemetery in the ordinary way, unless they had been caught outside in some wood or thicket, in which case they were buried where they were killed.

Public opinion is growing against such double murders. It was too often the custom to give young girls to old men, with the inevitable result that the young wives were apt to fall in love with men more of their own age and had therefore to be killed by their fathers.

At Zdrâjshë, when a bride was found on marriage to be pregnant by another man, the unusually mild divorced her at once, but the general rule was to have her killed. The groom locked up the bride, sent for her father, and bade him find her lover. The father always asked for three or four days' respite during which he made inquiries. If the bride had indeed done wrong, an honest father sought out and killed the lover and then came to shoot his own daughter. Or perhaps he gave the bridegroom a cartridge and bade him shoot her with it. All the principles involved are well illustrated by a story from Lurë, still the most undisciplined of all Albanian tribes. About 1928 Metë Hoti, having taken a bride from Vehib Runa in Gur, found her within three months of bearing a child by another man. He sent her back to her father, bidding him find the lover and kill them both. The father would not kill his daughter and persisted in his refusal in spite of Metë's threats to kill the whole family if he did not do so. The father's kinsmen supported Metë, and when he came one night and killed the father, mother, daughter and infant and four other people in the house, they refused to avenge these deaths because the father had transgressed against the unwritten law. For the same reason the government merely imprisoned Metë for a few months.

A woman might be killed for various reasons by a man in her husband's or her father's family. For example, her husband or his representative had leave to kill her for heinous crimes like adultery, incorrigible pilfering, or murdering one of his relatives, but if they killed her for any other reason, her father killed one of them. Two principles were involved: one, that a man bought only the services of his wife and not her life; the other, that a woman retained till her dying day her right to protection by her father's family. Her son by the murderer could not avenge her, because killing his

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682 562 628 596 [607] father, his only means of doing so, was forbidden. Her son by another husband, belonging as he did to another family, was free to avenge her. If a woman's son killed her for any but the above heinous crimes, her husband could not avenge her, since to do so he must kill his son. In Mirditë her brother could kill her son or other male in his family, but elsewhere it was held that her brother was as helpless as her husband because her son was a nearer relative and her nearest relative having killed her, her blood must be lost. If she was married for the second time and was killed by the son of her former marriage, her husband could kill his stepson, but as before, her brother's hands were tied, except in Mirditë, by the law of nearest relative.

When a man killed his brother's wife for any other reason than those stated above, her husband took no action if he and the murderer had not separated; the murder was a family affair. Her brother, however, killed one of them. If the two brothers had separated, the murderer had to pay blood money to her husband. If the husband did not exact it within a year, her brother killed either the murderer or her husband. Her husband never killed his brother: 'I'd never kill my brother for the sake of my wife', was a common saying.

When a woman was killed by her father or brother, her blood was always lost by the rule of nearest relative. If she was married, her husband did not, in most districts, continue friendly relations with the murderer, but in some, such as Krasniqë, he asked him for another girl and on receiving her forgot his annoyance at the other's [584] murder. The same was true if the murdered woman was only betrothed, for a betrothed girl 'is counted the man's wife'. When a woman was killed by some other man in her own family, by her uncle or her nephew for instance, by the rule of nearest relative her blood was lost if she was neither married nor betrothed. If she was [593] either and was not killed for a heinous crime, her husband felt he had been disgraced and avenged her by killing a male in her family.

When murders were committed by women, the situation was complicated by the fact that women belonged to two families, their husband's and their father's.

[672] If a woman murdered her husband, both his family and her father's were involved. The important factor was her motive, which was usually love for another man who had probably bought the necessary rat poison in the bazaar. If her lover was her

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husband's brother, she married him and her husband's blood was lost exactly as if he had died by his brother's hand. If her lover was an outsider, her husband's brother killed her. He had the right to do so, woman though she was, for a question of honour was involved, and for questions of honour women might lawfully be put to death. Her son by the dead man could not kill the murderess because matricide is not allowable. Her husband's son by another wife was under no such inhibition, for he was only her stepson and therefore no relative. If her father's family believed in her adulterous motive, they sent a cartridge to her husband's brother, thereby signifying that they gave him leave to kill her and would not avenge her death. If they did not believe in the alleged motive, they avenged her by killing a man in her husband's family and an unusually bitter feud resulted.

Sometimes her husband's brother was too high-spirited or too angry to rest content with killing the murderess and killed one of her male relatives as well; he would plead that a woman's blood could never equal a man's and that her male relatives were responsible for her misdeeds. Sometimes a murderess escaped alive to her father's house. In that case she was held to have escaped from the suzerainty of her husband's family and became a stranger; as a stranger she must expiate her crime, but her sex shielded her personally and threw the onus of expiation on her male relatives—'Women don't have blood feuds'. Her husband's brother was therefore bound to kill one of her relatives. To avoid losing a male for his daughter's crime her father sometimes killed her himself, a desperate act that always satisfied her husband's brother.

A woman rarely murdered any other man than her husband. If she did murder her brother, it was assumed that it had happened by accident as he was her surest protector. There are no records of the murder of father or paternal uncle by a woman.

The last category of murders within the family includes the very rare cases in which a woman murdered a woman in her husband's or her father's family. If she murdered her mother or her daughter, both most unlikely contingencies if she were sane, the victim's blood was lost by law of nearest relative. In all other cases the result depended on whether her victim was single or married. Thus the murder of her unmarried sister, paternal aunt, brother's daughter, counted as a suicide and the victim's blood was lost. If she murdered her husband's sister, the victim's blood was again

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Again, a woman from Tërbac, near Elbasan, hearing that her son
562 had been killed at a third person's instigation, took his revolver and
*628 killed the instigator. Unfortunately for her, the date was about
[682] 1923 when a modern government was already functioning; she was arrested and tried for murder, but in view of the circumstances she was condemned to no more than a year and a half's imprisonment. The public were astonished to find that the government had punished a woman on much the same terms as a man.

[593] Assuming that a woman could steel herself to murder anyone, it is natural to find her avenging her father, son or brother. Given primitive Albanian ideas about the proprieties between husband and wife, and the feeling that the wife remained a member of her father's household, it is somewhat surprising to find one avenging her husband. A woman of western Mat went one day to the bazaar and there saw the man who had murdered her husband. In spite of the press of people she drew a revolver and shot him dead; as she had come provided with the weapon, there is little doubt that she did not act on the spur of the moment. About 1883 Fatime Almetaj, a woman born in Kostejë near Martanesh and married in Përvall, was busy baking one day while her husband talked to a neighbour. On hearing a gunshot she rushed out to find her husband already dead and the neighbour running away. She ran inside, seized her husband's rifle and again rushed out. The neighbour had already reached his own doorstep when she fired. As soon as she saw him fall dead, she re-entered her house and resumed her baking; her husband had been avenged, there were others in the family to feed, and the dough was getting cold. In neither of these cases do records show whose life the enemy took in return for the one she had taken; by right it should have been one of the males in her husband's family.

593 In certain cases both the avenger and the expiator of a murder
*628 might be drawn from outside the household directly concerned.
[826] For instance, if a murderer and his brother were separated, the avenger might kill the latter while his blood was boiling, a period estimated in Dibër at one hour and in Mirditë and elsewhere at twenty-four hours. When his blood had cooled he must not molest the separated brother, and might be required to find a guarantor that he would not do so. Conversely, a man separated from his murdered brother might avenge him during the regulation period, but not afterwards.

613 Sometimes the rule of 'boiling blood' was extended to larger
*628

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1
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of the padres, being Albanian mountain men themselves, thought this right, though they admitted that the beating was sometimes cruelly severe.

M A 562

In some ways the women have more freedom than among the Montenegrins, for they are permitted to give their opinion freely on important subjects, and it is often asked, and they join in general conversation. Nor do their husbands ever apologize for their existence.

In Montenegro, on the other hand, as often as not the master of the house has shouted: "Be quiet, woman," when his wife only wanted to ask some innocent question. I never heard any of Iké's views except when Krsto was out, and one was always hearing, "Long hair, short wits, a woman's head!" hurled at the women. The Albanian woman, on the other hand, would joke and chaff the men; would even, in the streets of Scutari, call their husbands out of the drink-shop and tell them they had had enough. Nor does the Albanian woman have to bow humbly and kiss the hand of every male visitor as does the Montenegrin peasant woman. Among the Dukagini I found the men would even fetch water—a thing no Montenegrin "junak" would condescend to do.

A 577 684

A curious case illustrating the rights of the husband occurred while I was in Albania. A mountain woman left her husband and came to Scutari, where she lived by prostitution among the Turkish garrison. The husband's honour was blackened, but if he killed his wife he would owe blood to her family. He therefore consulted her brother, her nearest surviving male relative. The brother agreed that his family, too, was blackened, and gave the man the cartridge wherewith to shoot her. Shot she was, and public opinion considered the husband had acted rightly and cleaned the honour of both families. I said that in such a case divorce should be permitted, but was told that so long as she was alive the family honour would still be black; a divorce would be useless.

5. Marriage Customs in Montenegro

M 583

In Montenegro, and all through the Serb-speaking lands, marriages were arranged by the head of the house. The young people were rarely consulted. A century ago in Montenegro infant and child betrothals were not uncommon, and the young couple did not see each other before marriage. Old Serbian ballads show that exogamy was the rule, for the hero, we are usually told, "sought his bride from afar." Such marriages were designed to strengthen the "house." We find in ballads and tales the youth who laments to his father that no wife has yet been found for him; to whom his father replies: "I have long sought

M [582]

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania EG1

To the Land of the Eagle

ooo field for their breakfast of maize, and soon afterwards the work of placing the packs in position was begun. At 5.30 we bade the shepherd farewell, and, leaving the driver to bring the horses along after us, set out on foot down the trail.

576 When in Montenegro I had been struck by the friendly attitude of the peasants we met. There they were always ready with a smile and a cheery "Dobar dan!" But it was quite otherwise in Albania, where no salutations were given or expected and the peasants regarded us with a suspicious stare. I several times attempted a greeting, but [593] it never elicited any response. Greetings between relations, however, are warm enough if they are all like one I witnessed on the morning about which I am writing. A young Yankee-speaking Albanian had attached himself to our party and was waiting with us at the bottom of a hill for the rest of the pack-train to come up when he saw an old man driving two mules along the trail towards him. "That my pop", he said. And he ran forward and not only shook the old man warmly by the hand but kissed him on both cheeks with every sign of affection.

ooo An hour's trek brought us to a place which I understood was called "Chokus". The name as spelt on the board over the police post began with a Q and ended with a T, and how it came to be pronounced "Chokus" I cannot imagine. Here the gendarme handed in my way-bill and was replaced by a substitute, an oldish man for whom I was sorry later on. He started out literally at a moment's notice to trudge on foot the whole day's journey to Elbasan, there

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new *kulla*[1] If the man has many sons, the youngest may not get a new wife, but have to content himself with a widow, who is cheaper. Also it may take some time to find a fiancée for each boy, and many young men wait until quite late in life for marriage.

[163]

The principal reason for this delay, aside from the price, is the peculiar birth and death rate figures for Ghegnia. Many more boys than girls are born. In some regions the boys outnumber the girls almost two to one (see table 1)[2] However, as soon as a boy is big enough to carry a gun he may begin feuding, and stands a good chance of being killed. Then his marriage arrangements may be transferred to his brother, or cousin, and hence the young lady may marry someone quite different from her expectation.

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The alert and provident father, ever on the lookout for daughters-in-law, may place a substantial part of his bride price on a baby girl, as soon as she is born. Or he may gamble on the sex of an unborn child. The baby girl may find herself, at the age of 14, married to a man of 40. Once she has been handed over to her new husband and the folk-rites performed, she is still on trial, and may be sent home if she fails to produce offspring within a reasonable time. Among the Catholics the church wedding is often delayed until after the birth of the first child. In this way the bride can be returned if found wanting, and the rule of Christian monogamy will not have been technically violated. Among the Moslems, where both polygyny and divorce are officially permitted, these subterfuges are not needed.

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While the Gheg system of selecting mates may be well attuned to the exigencies of the environment, the economics, and the political life of the mountaineers, it permits little opportunity for personal adjustment between the husband and wife. Prince Jon Markajon (fig. 10, *a*)[3] summed this up when he said to me, gloomily, in the presence of his wife, "There is only one woman a man can trust—his mother." In the cases where cross-cousin marriage works out ideally, the boy and girl may have met before betrothal, or at least before marriage. The boy's mother, on a visit to her own kin, may take her youthful son with her, and he will have a chance to play with his

[1] [see footnote, cat 116, p. 23 e -- Analyst.]

[2] [see cat. 116, p. 23b -- Analyst]

[3] [see cat. 116, p. 110 -- Analyst]

593 maternal uncle's children. Then when the bride joins her husband in his father's house, she will come directly under the supervision of her paternal aunt, a woman whom she has already seen, and who represents an extension of her own family in the strange household. Such an ideal arrangement still makes no provision for a selection of mates on the basis of personality adjustments. It merely makes the change from one household to the other a little easier than if the girl were a total stranger. Very often a girl's fiancé is killed and she has to marry one of his brothers, a cousin, or someone of an entirely different family, and there will be no familiar aunt to smooth things over, but instead a suspicious and exacting mother-in-law, with whom her only ties are through her husband.

583 It is no wonder that brides sometimes run away. If they come home their fathers usually return them. Not infrequently they elope and if they are lucky settle in some city, or distant countryside where the limb of Lek Dukagin's [538] law is not long enough to reach them. Gheg epic poetry, which the traveler hears sung night after night in private houses, hans, and gendarmeries, dwells frequently on the theme of elopement. One hears at length about couple after couple, hopelessly in love, who break all of the rules, run away, and meet a tragic but inexorable fate. In the epics they seldom if ever make good their escape. In real life I believe that they sometimes succeed, and their elopements, successful or otherwise, help reduce the population of the mountains.

589 If a young woman is faced with a marriage which she cannot bring herself to consummate, and if she has enough strength of character to take the following step, she can avoid matrimony by becoming a "sworn virgin" (fig. 10, *d*). She summons a meeting of the 12 elders of her community and in their presence swears perpetual chastity. By this means she not only gets out of her engagement, but also prevents a feud between her father's kin and those of [838] her fiancé. At this point she becomes technically a man. She may or may not don masculine clothing. She will carry a gun, and fight like other men. She will plough and reap, and do all of the tasks of a man. If she breaks her oath, the elders will, in theory, burn

[See cat. nb, p. 110--Analyst]